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JULY 1909

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THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
JULY 1909

MODERN POETRY

Love's Portrait

By Laurence Binyon

OUT of the day-glare, out of all uproar,
Hurrying in ways disquieted, bring me
To silence, and earth's ancient peace restore,
That with profounder vision I may see.
In dew-baptizing dimness let me lose
Tired thoughts; dispeople the world-haunted mind,
With burning of interior fire refined;
Cleanse all my sense: then, Love, mine eyes unclose.

Let it be dawn, and such low light increase,
As when from darkness pure the hills emerge;
And solemn foliage trembles from its peace
As with an ecstasy; and round the verge
Of solitary coppices cold flowers
Freshen upon their clustered stalks; and where
Wafts of wild odour sweeten the blue air,
Drenched mosses dimly sparkle on old towers.

So, for my spirit, let the light be slow
And tender as among those dawning trees,
That on this vision of my heart may grow
The beloved form by delicate degrees,
The desired form that Earth was waiting for,
Her last completion and felicity,
Who through the dewy hush comes, and for me
Sings a new meaning into all Time's lore.

Just-dinted temples, cheek and brow and hair—
Ah, never curve that wind breathed over snow
Could match what the divine hand moulded there,
Or in her lips, where life's own colours glow,
Or in the throat, the sweet well of her speech;
Yet all forgotten, when those eyelids raise
The beam of eyes that hold me in their gaze
Clear with a tenderness no words can reach.

Some silken shred, whose fair embroidery throbbed
Once on a queen's young breast; a mirror dimmed
That has held how much beauty, and all robbed!
One bright tress from a head that poets hymned;
A rent flag that warm blood was spent for: sighs,
Faith, love, have made these fragrant, and sweet pain
Quickens its pangs upon our pulse again,
Charmed at a touch out of old histories.

But thou, whence com'st thou, bringing in thy face
More than all these are charged with? Not faint myrrh
Of embalmed bliss, dead passion's written trace,
Half-faded; but triumphant and astir
Life tinges the cheek's change and the lips' red.
Thy deep compassions, thy long hopes and fears,
Thy joys, thine indignations, and thy tears,
To enrich these, what stormy hearts have bled!

For thine unknown sake, how has life's dear breath
Been cherished past despair: how, lifted fierce
In exultation, has love smiled at death,
For one hope hazarding the universe.
What wisdom has been spelled from sorrow's book,
What anguish in the patient will immured,
What bliss made perfect, what delight abjured,
That in these eyes thine eyes at last might look!

O mystery! out of ravin, strife, and wrong,
Thou comest, Time's last sweetness in the flower,
Life's hope and want, my never-ended song!
Futurity is folded in this hour
With all fruition; joy, and loss, and smart;
And death, and birth; the wooed, the feared, the unknown;
And there our lives, mid earth's vast undertone,
Are beatings of one deep and mighty heart.

Four Songs of the Shame of Labour

By Thomas Burke

(Sometime charity child, working lad, unemployed, and under-ranker)

Curse the people ! Blast the people !
Damn the lower orders !

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

CHILDREN OF TOIL

LONDON ORPHAN ASYLUM

BREAKING from the lap of the lowland pasture,
  Sudden as a foam-crest single on a sea,
Dreamy in the rich noon the old grey school-house
  Pallisades the heavens with spires slim and free.
Creeper-clad the walls breathe rippling crimson,
  Fiery as Youth all athirst for its day . . .
Oh, that the day might be such an one that sunset
  Comes neither feared nor reproached for delay !

Fleeing from the schoolroom's velvet coolness,
  Light lulling croons to the hill's head are spun.
Upward to the teacher demure little pupils
  Turn timid faces, as buds to April sun.
Cheerily they pass through the merry lanes and meadows,
  Sombre are their dresses, their faces are as bright ;
Dreamy, gleamy Springtime is in their hearts, but shadows
  Hover in their going to strangle their delight.

When to the moon she unfolds her gardens,
  Starred through and through with the pale passion-flower ;
Then on the night hangs the life-breath of Childhood ;
  Move with the spent leaf; it is her little hour.
Soon shall her sweetness be yielded to the moonlight,
  Ay, the melting moonlight soon alone shall know
Hopes and fears and fancies, for swallow-swift the years fly ;
  Early toil is theirs, poor joy and petty woe !

THE HUMORIST

A MAGISTERIAL PORTRAIT

A PALE and wintry sort of face,
With knifish lips and thin grey hair;
A lazy grin, a long, lean nose,
And steel-blue eyes that slowly stare.
With lifeless voice he calls "Next case!"
And murmurs jests at our disgrace—
The blasted joker!

I seen him chip the Unemployed,
When they was up for making rows.
I seen him bait their starving wives,
And rot the poor man's marriage vows.
Yes, there he sits, the well-fed ape,
With cops to cheer his cheapest jape—
The blasted joker!

A girl had had a bastard once,
And tried to strangle it with string.
He turns to the reporters' box,
And says to that poor ragged thing—
"In future girls like you, I hope,
Will not be given so much *rope!*"—
The blasted joker!

THE JOY OF LABOUR

(It was stated that prisoner's earnings were fifteen shillings a week. He had a wife and two children)

THEY caught him lifting purses,
And they took him to the beak.
They said he was in reg'lar work
At fifteen bob a week.
It is a shocking thing to see
A man become a thief, when he
Is working reg'lar every day at fifteen bob a week.

Oh!
Fifteen bob a week!
Fifteen bob a week!
It's beer and skittles keeping kids on fifteen bob a week!

He said the kids were poorly,
And the roof let in the rain.
The doctor said that strengthening food
Would pull them round again.
The parson called, and he confessed
That things were ordered for the best;
He hoped the chap was thankful for his fifteen bob a week.

Oh!
Fifteen bob a week!
Fifteen bob a week!
It's blazing fun to feed the kids on fifteen bob a week!

So now he's tearing oakum,
And the wife has gone and died.
The local House was angered
At her very foolish pride.
They took the kids and labelled them
As—Pauper Children N and M
Of Convict X, who used to earn his fifteen bob a week.

Oh!
Fifteen bob a week!
Fifteen bob a week!
Oh, isn't life a bleeding sport on fifteen bob a week!

THE SICK VAGRANT

I HAVE built me a Castle in Spain,
And no more will I mouth of our wrong.
I have found the nepenthe of pain—
I have built me a Castle in Spain,
And have clasped my darling again,
And have crowned her with lily and song.
I have built me a Castle in Spain,
And no more will I mouth of our wrong.

Peckham Road is a Valley of Smiles
(I have learnt of the truth from the moon). . . .
Though I tramp many pavemented miles,
Peckham Road is a Valley of Smiles;
For Fancy has won me with wiles,
And, starving, I walk in a swoon.
Peckham Road is a Valley of Smiles
(I have learnt of the truth from the moon).

From The Net of the Stars

By F. S. Flint

A POET ADVISES HIS LADY

Dear, I have dreams
When the night is flung and the stars fall
About me in white streams
Upon a sable pall.

You will not win
To the high room open to heaven,
Breathless carrier
Of the world's base din.

Say, were it not more meet
To sandal you with poppies for shoon,
And of the sacred moon
A ghostly wafer eat?

Think! how ardent and discreet
Would your bearing be,
Your bosom burning white in monstrancy,
And wise your feet!

Dear, when I dream
I would have you thus
Part of my dream,
As though from heaven you came.
Surely before me gleams a firmament of stars!
Surely about my head is jewelled fire of stars!
O come to me, white Vestal of the Moon,
Out of the night.

I hear your grave footfall upon the stars.
Come! the way is free,
And on my threshold pause a while,
That I may see
Night's wonder in your smile.

THEY MEET IN A WOOD AT NIGHT

THIS is a rose of burning wine,—
This is a star.

This is a rose that grew on a star,—
This is a star in a battle-line
Of whirring worlds,
Chanting a hymn of flight
In the fight
With Night;—
This is a rose of burning wine,—
Our love.

Voices!
Voices that come through the wood,—
Voices that come through the wood at night,—
Voices that come through the wood at night in the silence
That is ushered into a frame
Of little noises:

Wind on leaf, and wind that weeps,—
Wind that wooes, and wind that creeps
Beneath the bushes and whispers where Pan dreams and sleeps.

And you came,
And there were no more noises.

But they echo in the aisles
And gusty passages of my pillared soul,
And my doom
Is to be slave of their reverberate tomb.

O rose of burning wine,—
Our love,
Erect on a star
That is our winged chariot
In the fight
With Night,—
O lips of burning wine,
O eyes that lighten mine,

Around our heads is a starry wreath,
And the white moon has flung an aureole
From pole to pole;
But black Night fumes beneath,
And all the stars will sicken with its breath.

Let us creep under the bush to the bed Pan has made.
I am afraid!

HE LIKENS HER TO A ROSE-TREE, HIMSELF TO THE WIND

Our feet are treading on earth's parapet
Over the heavens; among the stars we stept.

The night is all before us, far and fair,
And the four winds play in our ruffled hair.

Along the black bare branch sleeps almond-bloom,
Silvery in the slow silver of the moon.

You are mysterious, and you speak no word;
And who you may be I have never heard.

But though this secret I can never know,
So that you love me, I am content 'tis so,—

So that I love you, I, the wind, and you
The slim young rose-tree against which I blew,

And rapt the earth with perfume. From the lake
The bright swift fish leapt up for your sweet sake,

And the slow buds were quickened in their pale
Green chalices. I woke the nightingale.

Dear, lift your breasts like two white roses to
The stars. The moon will have no shame of you.

In the calm splendour and the pain of night
The wind will babble songs of its delight.

HE THINKS OF HER LINEAGE

Over the stars
Came my love to me,
Dancing, dancing
Through Eternity.

She hath walked on planets
Where strange flowers grow,
And her soul hath perfumes
I do not know.

Amid strange peoples
She hath stayed and heard
A music that haunts her
Of man and bird.

She hath seen strange colours
And drunk the wines
Of a myriad vineyards
And the strangest vines.

In the fields of the moon
She hath strayed, hath strayed,
Among moon-roses,
A white moon-maid.

And now on the earth
She hath come to me,
Fragrant with spice
Of Eternity.

AND IS LED BY THE CUCKOO TO JEST WITH HER

On the hard husk
Of the world's old tree
Has sprung the green shoot
Of your love for me.

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
Sweet mockery !

The hawthorn hedge
And the lilac's bloom
Have told each other
In hushed perfume.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
And a marble tomb!

The golden tulip
Has wagged an old head
In a roguish way
To an empty bed.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
I would I were dead!

The apple-blossom
We saw last night,
Moonlit and as though
With stars alight,

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
Has fallen—in fright?

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
And if it were true
What the flowers are saying
Of me and you!

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
Is it rose—or rue?

Two Indian Sketches

By M. N.

A HINDU WEDDING

The great square is filled with a gay throng, who part and join again like the coloured fragments in a kaleidoscope. They fringe the tops of the yellow walls of the old palace, and congregate like clusters of brilliant tropical flowers on the flat roofs. They clamber on to the elephants with gorgeous trappings who stand swaying their great bodies with a sleepy, rhythmical motion.

Above, the Indian sky, brilliant with sunlight, stretches a blue canopy over the festive scene. The hot, dry air is filled with the excited buzz of conversation; music is wafted faintly to the ear, together with the dull throbbing of tom-toms; while guns thunder an irregular salute. It is a great *tamasha*—the last day of the marriage of the Raja's only daughter.

Ceremonies of various kinds have been proceeding during the past week, for a Hindu marriage is not lightly or quickly accomplished. Much time and often a small fortune are expended by the father on a daughter's wedding, which may be a terrible tax on a poor man. No wonder that the birth of a female child is sometimes considered a calamity, since the rites must be performed, if only for the sake of the parent's peace in the next world.

The murmur of the crowd grows louder as the marriage procession comes into sight. The bridegroom, in gorgeous attire, covered with jewels, and riding on a richly caparisoned elephant, is coming to claim his bride amidst universal rejoicings. He is quite old—already thirteen—and he has been engaged for eight years to his bride, aged ten.

* * * * * *

Shut away from the glaring heat and crowd, in the open court of the palace, where great palms raise their feathery foliage and fountains murmur in the white marble square, all is cool and fragrant. The domes and towers stand out against an intense

blue patch of sky above. Round the galleries shadowy forms are seen dimly through the *purdah* screens, which sway gently in the breeze. Behind are the women—the women who, ignorant and uneducated, are clogging the wheels of progress in India.

Who shall fathom the influence that makes itself felt throughout the land from the mysteries of the zenana? Who shall measure the unseen power of these veiled women over the men—a power far greater than that wielded by their Western sisters? Who can say what intrigues are not being planned, what mischief is not brewing? Who can feel what heartburnings, what agonising jealousies are not throbbing beneath the jewelled *saris* behind the *purdah* screen? For the women are there—watching—and the sense of their influence is for ever present.

The murmur of the swaying crowds outside is heard faintly, and the heavy boom of the guns makes the air vibrate. In the centre of the marble court the bridegroom stands immobile, facing a drapery which is raised as a barrier to screen him from his little bride, who, heavily veiled, waits on the other side, facing the east and her future lord, whom she has never seen. Behind each a man with a drawn sword is on guard—a relic of ancient days when the bridegroom forcibly abducted the bride and the ceremony was often interrupted by the appearance of a rival who carried off the lady before it was completed.

All eyes are fixed on the motionless pair. A hush has come over the assembly. The propitious instant, fixed by the astrologers, for the falling of the curtain may come at any moment. The Brahmin priests who stand by mutter prayers in Sanscrit in a monotonous drone. The guests throw handfuls of rice on the happy pair at intervals. The chanting of the "Mantras" continues. All are waiting with a strange thrill; the fateful moment fixed by the stars cannot be far distant. The child wife has bent her head low; she seems weighed down by her heavy draperies and by the sense of her own inferiority. The boy who is to be her master and her god, he who is the substance of which she is the shadow, stands with unmoved countenance and eyes that look into nothingness. Still they wait, immovable, and the murmur of the priests' voices continues unceasingly.

Suddenly the curtain falls; they stand face to face for the first time, amidst the excited murmurs of the assembly and the thunder of the guns outside.

* * * * * *

The sacrificial fire is fed by rice and *ghee*, and round this fire the bridegroom leads his bride by the hand, making her stand

on a piece of stone, which represents the great "mountain of the seven castes," the original home of their ancestors. He conjures her to be as firm in her faith to him as the stone upon which she stands. Once again he leads her three times round the sacred fire, she taking seven steps on to seven heaps of rice. This is the crowning ceremony, and the one which binds the two children irrevocably. Seven is a mystic number, and every step has a symbolical meaning, which is uttered aloud by the bridegroom. The different stages represent the growth of the relations between man and wife, from the first step, which signifies the taking of food together, followed by united prosperity, health, and the rearing of offspring,* to the last, which indicates the friendship and companionship that should be the crown of married life. Any rite performed in the presence of fire is doubly binding, for the gods are in the fire.

Outside the sunset is fading from a golden glory to deep violet; the lights in the palace are lit, illuminating the crudely painted figures of the household gods, which stand in niches in the wall, and the crouching forms of the guests, who are squatting on the floors in their brilliant-coloured robes. The air is full of sweet, heavy scents, and of the sparkle and glitter of costly embroideries and wonderful gems. In the distance the strains of a band playing selections from *The Merry Widow* are faintly heard.

* * * * * *

The marriage is over, and the bridegroom, invested with new dignity as a married man, returns to his home, while the bride remains with her parents till the time comes when it is decreed she shall go to her husband—and to her mother-in-law, who, real mistress of the new home, will rule her with a rod of iron. The child wife will submit blindly to her will, for it is only motherhood that will give her power and dignity. To the young Indian woman meekness is the most admirable quality. Her ideal is the gentle Sita, wife of Rama, who for ever, even under the most cruel and unjust accusations, bowed to her husband's will.

The purple Eastern night has fallen; the façades of the palace are brilliant with illuminations; weird strains of music issue from within, for a nautch is being held in the great Durbar Hall for the benefit of the Raja's male guests, who will sit motionless till the small hours of the morning watching the

* According to some Vedic schools, unity of interest as regards cattle instead of children is symbolised.

dance. The town also is illuminated, and crowds wander about idly gazing at the unwonted display of lights, and at the fireworks, which cut the velvet gloom of the night into strips of fire.

All outwardly is brilliant and joyful, yet behind the walls of the illuminated palace are jealousy and unhappiness. The women have quarrelled, and the Raja, who has fasted all day, is harassed and tired beyond words. Important ceremonies have not been performed because one great lady has refused to comply with certain rules of etiquette. The Brahmins, too, who hold India in their invisible iron grip, have threatened trouble. Every Brahmin who presents himself at the palace—and they may number thousands—must have a free meal and a rupee on such an occasion as this, or untold evils will arise. No one can tell what trouble is not shadowing the future of the two children who have just been united, and of those around them.

It is not all joy and happiness that reigns in the gorgeous palace, with its tessellated marble floors, stately pillars, and rich draperies, and on the marriage day of his only daughter the Raja bows his head and weeps.

THE DASARA

The leisurely train saunters into the little station quite unconcerned at being already an hour and a half late and still far from its destination. The sun blazes down on picturesque groups of natives of every class and description—a queer mixture of colour, clothes, and coiffure. There is a sudden movement amongst them as the train stops and they try to enter the carriages, which are already full to overflowing. Men, women, and children are packed together like sardines, some squatting on the floor, others on the seats. All are smiling and good-humoured. It is oppressively hot, and rows of brown feet and legs hang out of the window to cool. In a carriage marked "Europeans" a bunch of grinning brown faces, with glistening white teeth, gaze contentedly at their less fortunate brethren who are unable to get a seat. The train is full; so much the worse. Luckily time does not count; another train will come some time to-day or to-morrow. What does it matter? Those who cannot find a seat squat contentedly on their heels again, and wait immovably, with a patience that never tires, for the next train. Various foods are being brought round on trays, special food for Brahmins, for Hindus and Mahomedans. Cocoa-

nuts are very popular; brown arms stretch forth from the various compartments to take them from a man, who first gashes them with a murderous-looking curved knife, so that the milk can be readily drunk. The native guard has at length finished his long conversation with a friend, and the train proceeds slowly through the thick jungle, past rocky hills and emerald rice-fields, towards Mysore.

Everywhere there is movement towards Mysore, where the Dasara, or Durga *puja*, is being celebrated. The dusty roads and jungle paths are filled with strings of pedestrians, carrying all their worldly goods on their heads. Bullock-carts, with solid discs of wood for wheels, transport whole families towards Mysore, past groves of date-palms and huge-leaved plantains, past grassy glades where clumps of bamboos raise their feathery foliage, past quaint villages, temples, and sacred tanks, past great banyan-trees, amongst whose spreading roots and branches troops of chattering monkeys disport themselves.

* * * * * *

Crowds have already collected, and the streets and open spaces of the city are filled with a many-coloured throng. Flags wave from all the buildings; tom-toms are throbbing; queer strains of native music are wafted to the ear, and processions of elephants and camels wend their way through the crowds. The gay scene is canopied by a cloudless blue sky, and the Indian sun blazes on a wonderful Eastern picture of coloured movement.

Mysore is *en fête*, and every day *puja* is performed by the Maharaja, who for the time is a god, though practically a prisoner in his palace—a slave almost, for he may not even shave, for were he to receive the smallest cut or scratch during the Dasara evil spirits might enter into him.

In ancient days, when the rains ceased, the Maharaja and his troops set out to war. The day chosen for his departure is doubly auspicious, for it is the anniversary of Rama's successful expedition to rescue his consort Sita, the ideal type of Indian womanhood, from the monster Ravana, who had stolen her from her lord. On this day also the goddess Durga, wife of the dread god Shiva, slew a dragon; hence the Dasara is called the "Durga *puja*," and is an occasion when the goddess Durga, or Kali, is worshipped.

Now before entering on a warlike expedition it is necessary to propitiate all the powers and spirits of good and evil, since if one were offended evil might befall. During the ten days that the Dasara lasts, therefore, *puja*, or prayer, is offered to all

the household gods, animals, and to everything that helps man to live. Horses, bulls, cows, elephants, books, tools, pens, and ink-bottles are all worshipped and blessed. The poor *chaprasi*, according to Risley, on this occasion worships a Government despatch-box, and makes it offerings of rice and flowers. Motor-cars are also worshipped, for do they not contain some mysterious power, and is not every inanimate thing that helps man to gain his livelihood a force to be respected ?

The last objects to be worshipped are the weapons of war. They are carried every morning in a golden palanquin through the town in a procession headed by elephants in *durbar* trappings. The blessing of the weapons is an important ceremony, and human blood must flow to propitiate the gods. In ancient days a victim was sacrificed. Now there is only wrestling in front of the palace ; but the wrestlers have iron claws strapped on to their hands, and when a little blood has flowed the gods are satisfied, and the Maharaja, who sits in state, stops the fight and rewards the combatants.

* * * * * *

Before ascending his throne of gold, where he is worshipped as a god, the Maharaja does *puja* to it, as a symbol of authority. It is a sacred throne, and, legend says, belonged to the Pandus, the five famous brothers of the " Mahabharata." It was found buried, by a holy man, and was presented to Chika Deva by the Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb. The British troops discovered it in a lumber-room when Seringapatam was taken. Originally made of fig-wood overlaid with ivory, it was afterwards covered over with gold and silver and carved with figures from Hindu mythology. A stair of silver leads up to this throne of gold, which is surmounted by a golden umbrella, on the top of which is a great gold bird's head, with huge green eyes made of cabuchon emeralds, which glow dully.

The throne stands on a cloth-of-gold carpet, and is raised on three steps covered with crimson cloth. It is wreathed with flowers, whose petals strew the red steps, and long tassels of pearls hang from it.

On this wonderful throne in the centre of the great Dasara Hall of his palace the Maharaja sits in Eastern fashion—a god dressed in cloth-of-gold and blazing with jewels. A golden sceptre is at his right hand, and the great diamond aigrette on his turban sparkles and flashes. He sits motionless, the imposing figure of an Eastern potentate, impressive in his extraordinary dignity. Outside, beyond the pillars of the great hall, the

purple night is made brilliant by illuminations. Inside the splendour is dazzling; the Maharaja's bodyguard and ministers in gorgeous attire stand behind him, and a crowd of followers line the hall. Music is playing, and outside in the dim light the troops are performing a military ride. Above in the galleries the massive cloth-of-gold draperies undulate gently as the *purdah* ladies move behind them. From the slits cut in places glimpses can be caught of dark eyes, and sometimes of bejewelled hands. The murmur of the vast throng that flows like a restless sea round the palace outside rises and falls on the air, heavy with perfumes. Fireworks blaze out in the night, and the wailing cry of praise to the Maharaja bursts forth continuously. "Maharaj ki jai Maharaj" from the *chebdars*, who raise their golden staffs and let them fall slowly as their cry dies away. It is an "Arabian Nights" scene of dazzling gorgeousness. The Europeans pass in front of the glittering apparition on the golden throne, bowing low. Slowly and gravely the golden figure raised above salutes them, and gives each lady a bouquet of flowers as they pass from the brilliant scene into the night.

* * * * * *

The long days of *puja* are over; every power has been propitiated, and the troops set out for war.

Under the brilliant sun Mysore is seething with a mass of humanity, dressed in white, with many-coloured turbans, a variegated, moving mass, looking as though the different-hued petals of gigantic flowers had been thickly strewn over the land and were moving agitated by the breeze. A hum of voices rises from the throng, mingled with strains of music and the beat of distant drums. Through the motley crowd the procession wends its way from the palace, headed by camels. All the animals are in *durbar* costume and draped with gay colours, and the sunlight plays on their gold clothes. The native troops, with quaint old-fashioned guns, pass in good order, followed by elephants, nautch-girls, and various high officials in state carriages. With anxious care, attendants lead the sacred horse and the sacred cow, both very old and gorgeously caparisoned. The young Yuvaraj, dressed in cloth-of-gold, mounted on a black horse, with a golden umbrella held over his head, precedes the Maharaja.

Reclining in a golden howda, borne above the crowd on the huge sacred elephant, painted with elaborate designs and hung with golden ornaments, a solitary, glittering, golden figure, the Maharaja advances majestically. A murmur greets him; the

crowd bends before the immobile symbol of authority, which looks neither to the right nor to the left.

The procession winds on, out into the country, where the shades of night are falling. It halts; lamps are lit to illumine the great open space where the torchlight review is held. The Maharaja, who has exchanged his elephant for a black charger, watches his troops pass before him. Dim masses of men and horses, looking ghostly in the faint light, move to the strains of English military music.

* * * * * *

The fight is over, and the troops return victoriously to their capital. The night is dark; but the buildings in the city are twinkling with illuminations, and the expectant crowd sways and murmurs in the shadow. The sound of bands and tom-toms heralds the return of the procession; the flaming torches fill the air with a pungent odour, and throw the figures of the men and animals into strong relief, making the golden draperies shimmer. A blaze of light marks the approach of the stately elephant, which towers above all. A great cheer rends the air ("Maharaj, Maharaj ki jai!"), and showers of sweet-scented blossoms rain down upon the solitary figure, gleaming with priceless gems. The procession passes, winding like a flaming snake amongst the dim masses of the heaving, dusky crowd towards the illuminated palace. The night seems to darken as the fiery snake disappears in the far distance. The crowd closes over it; one by one the illuminations fade, and darkness descends over the moving forms.

The Dasara is ended; life enters on its normal course; the people return to their remote villages; the Maharaja becomes mortal once more, and appears on the following day in European attire at the races.

Other Kingdom

By E. M. Forster

I

"'QUEM, whom; *fugis*, are you avoiding; *ah demens*, you silly ass; *habitarunt di quoque*, gods too have lived in; *silvas*, the woods.' Go ahead!"

I always brighten the classics—it is part of my system—and therefore I translated *demens* by "silly ass." But Miss Beaumont need not have made a note of the translation, and Ford, who knows better, need not have echoed after me, "Whom are you avoiding, you silly ass, gods too have lived, in the woods."

"Ye—es," I replied, with scholarly hesitation. "Ye—es. *Silvas*—woods, wooded spaces, the country generally. Yes. *Demens*, of course, is *de—mens*. 'Ah, witless fellow! Gods, I say, even gods have dwelt in the woods ere now.'"

"But I thought gods always lived in the sky," said Mrs. Worters, interrupting our lesson for I think the third-and-twentieth time.

"Not always," answered Miss Beaumont. As she spoke she inserted "witless fellow" as an alternative to "silly ass."

"I always thought they lived in the sky."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Worters," the girl repeated. "Not always." And finding her place in the note-book she read as follows: "Gods. Where. Chief deities—Mount Olympus. Pan—most places, as name implies. Oreads—mountains. Sirens, Tritons, Nereids—water (salt). Naiads—water (fresh). Satyrs, Fauns, &c.—woods. Dryads—trees."

"Well, dear, you have learnt a lot. And will you now tell me what good it has done you?"

"It has helped me—" faltered Miss Beaumont. She was very earnest over her classics. She wished she could have said what good they had done her.

Ford came to her rescue. "Of course it's helped you. The classics are full of tips. They teach you how to dodge things."

I begged my young friend not to dodge his Virgil lesson.

"But they do!" he cried. "Suppose that long-haired brute Apollo wants to give you a music lesson. Well, out you pop into the laurels. Or Universal Nature comes along. You aren't feeling particularly keen on Universal Nature, so you turn into a reed."

"Is Jack mad?" asked Mrs. Worters.

But Miss Beaumont had caught the allusions—which were quite ingenious, I must admit. "And Crœsus?" she inquired. "What was it one turned into to get away from Crœsus?"

I hastened to tidy up her mythology. "Midas, Miss Beaumont, not Crœsus. And he turns you—you don't turn yourself: he turns you into gold."

"There's no dodging Midas," said Ford.

"Surely—" said Miss Beaumont. She had been learning Latin not quite a fortnight, but she would have corrected the Regius Professor.

He began to tease her. "Oh, there's no dodging Midas! He just comes, he touches you, and you pay him several thousand per cent. at once. You're gold—a young golden lady—if he touches you."

"I won't be touched!" she cried, relapsing into her habitual frivolity.

"Oh, but he'll touch you."

"He sha'n't!"

"He will."

"He sha'n't!"

"He will."

Miss Beaumont took up her Virgil and smacked Ford over the head with it.

"Evelyn! Evelyn!" said Mrs. Worters. "Now you are forgetting yourself. And you also forget my question. What good has Latin done you?"

"Mr. Ford—what good has Latin done you?"

"Mr. Inskip—what good has Latin done us?"

So I was let in for the classical controversy. The arguments for the study of Latin are perfectly sound, but they are difficult to remember, and the afternoon sun was hot, and I needed my tea. But I had to justify my existence as a coach, so I took off my eye-glasses and breathed on them and said, "My dear Ford, what a question!"

"It's all right for Jack," said Mrs. Worters. "Jack has to pass his entrance examination. But what's the good of it for Evelyn? None at all."

"No, Mrs. Worters," I persisted, pointing my eye-glasses at

her. "I cannot agree. Miss Beaumont is—in a sense—new to our civilisation. She is entering it, and Latin is one of the subjects in her entrance examination also. No one can grasp modern life without some knowledge of its origins."

"But why should she grasp modern life?" said the tiresome woman.

"Well, there you are!" I retorted, and shut up my eye-glasses with a snap.

"Mr. Inskip, I am not there. Kindly tell me what's the good of it all. Oh, I've been through it myself: Jupiter, Venus, Juno, I know the lot of them. And many of the stories not at all proper."

"Classical education," I said drily, "is not entirely confined to classical mythology. Though even the mythology has its value. Dreams if you like, but there is value in dreams."

"I too have dreams," said Mrs. Worters, "but I am not so foolish as to mention them afterwards."

Mercifully we were interrupted. A rich virile voice close behind us said, "Cherish your dreams!" We had been joined by our host, Harcourt Worters—Mrs. Worters' son, Miss Beaumont's *fiancé*, Ford's guardian, my employer: I must speak of him as Mr. Worters.

"Let us cherish our dreams!" he repeated. "All day I've been fighting, haggling, bargaining. And to come out on to this lawn and see you all learning Latin, so happy, so passionless, so Arcadian——"

He did not finish the sentence, but sank into the chair next to Miss Beaumont, and possessed himself of her hand. As he did so she sang: "Áh yoù sílly àss góds lìve in woóds!"

"What have we here?" said Mr. Worters with a slight frown.

With the other hand she pointed to me.

"Virgil—" I stammered. "Colloquial translation——"

"Oh, I see. A colloquial translation of poetry." Then his smile returned. "Perhaps if gods live in woods, that is why woods are so dear. I have just bought Other Kingdom Copse!"

Loud exclamations of joy. Indeed, the beeches in that copse are as fine as any in Hertfordshire. Moreover, it, and the meadow by which it is approached, have always made an ugly notch in the rounded contours of the Worters' estate. So we were all very glad that Mr. Worters had purchased Other Kingdom. Only Ford kept silent, stroking his head where the Virgil had hit it, and smiling a little to himself as he did so.

"Judging from the price I paid, I should say that there was

a god in every tree. But price, this time, was no object." He glanced at Miss Beaumont. "You admire beeches, Evelyn, do you not?"

"I forget always which they are. Like this?"

She flung her arms up above her head, close together, so that she looked like a slender column. Then her body swayed and her delicate green dress quivered over it with the suggestion of countless leaves.

"My dear child!" exclaimed her lover.

"No: that is a silver birch," said Ford.

"Oh, of course. Like this, then." And she twitched up her skirts so that for a moment they spread out in great horizontal layers, like the layers of a beech.

We glanced at the house, but none of the servants were looking. So we laughed, and said she ought to go on the variety stage.

"Ah, this is the kind I like!" she cried, and practised the beech-tree again.

"I thought so," said Mr. Worters. "I thought so. Other Kingdom Copse is yours."

"Mine——?" She had never had such a present in her life. She could not realise it.

"The purchase will be drawn up in your name. You will sign the deed. Receive the wood, with my love. It is a second engagement ring."

"But is it—is it mine? Can I—do what I like there?"

"You can," said Mr. Worters, smiling.

She rushed at him and kissed him. She kissed Mrs. Worters. She would have kissed myself and Ford if we had not extruded elbows. The joy of possession had turned her head.

"It's mine! I can walk there, work there, live there. A wood of my own! Mine for ever."

"Yours, at all events, for ninety-nine years."

"Ninety-nine years?" I regret to say there was a tinge of disappointment in her voice.

"My dear child! Do you expect to live longer?"

"I suppose I can't," she replied, and flushed a little. "I don't know."

"Ninety-nine seems long enough to most people. I have got this house, this very lawn you are standing on, on a lease of ninety-nine years. Yet I call them my own, and I think I am justified. Am I not?"

"Oh, yes."

"Ninety-nine years is practically eternity. Isn't it?"

"Oh, yes. It must be."

Ford possesses a most inflammatory note-book. Outside it is labelled "Private," inside it is headed "Practically a book." I saw him make an entry in it now, "Eternity: practically ninety-nine years."

Mr. Worters, as if speaking to himself, now observed: "My goodness! My goodness! How land has risen! Perfectly astounding."

I saw that he was in need of a Boswell, so I said: "Has it, indeed?"

"My dear Inskip. Guess what I could have got that wood for ten years ago! But I refused. Guess why."

We could not guess.

"Because the transaction would not have been straight." A most becoming blush spread over his face as he uttered the noble word. "Not straight. Straight legally. But not morally straight. We were to force the hands of the man who owned it. I refused. The others—decent fellows in their way—told me I was squeamish. I said, 'Yes. Perhaps I am. My name is plain Harcourt Worters—not a well-known name if you go outside the City and my own country, but a name which, where it is known, carries, I flatter myself, some weight. And I will not sign my name to this. That is all. Call me squeamish if you like. But I will not sign. It is just a fad of mine. Let us call it a fad.'" He blushed again. Ford believes that his guardian blushes all over—that if you could strip him and make him talk nobly he would look like a boiled lobster. There's a picture of him in this condition in the note-book.

"So the man who owned it then didn't own it now?" said Miss Beaumont, who had followed the narrative with some interest.

"Oh, no!" said Mr. Worters.

"Why no?" said Mrs. Worters absently, as she hunted in the grass for her knitting-needle. "Of course not. It belongs to the widow."

"Tea!" cried her son, springing vivaciously to his feet. "I see tea and I want it. Come, mother. Come along, Evelyn, I can tell you it's no joke, a hard day in the battle of life. For life is practically a battle. To all intents and purposes a battle. Except for a few lucky fellows who can read books, and so avoid the realities. But I——"

His voice died away as he escorted the two ladies over the smooth lawn and up the stone steps to the terrace, on which the footman was placing tables and little chairs and a silver kettle-

stand. More ladies came out of the house. We could just hear their shouts of excitement as they also were told of the purchase of Other Kingdom.

I like Ford. The boy has the makings of a scholar and—though for some reason he objects to the word—of a gentleman. It amused me now to see his lip curl with the vague cynicism of youth. He cannot understand the footman and the solid silver kettle-stand. They make him cross. For he has dreams—not exactly spiritual dreams: Mr. Worters is the man for those: but dreams of the tangible and the actual: robust dreams, which take him, not to heaven, but to another earth. There are no footmen in this other earth, and the kettle-stands, I suppose, will not be made of silver, and I know that everything is to be itself, and not practically something else. But what this means, and, if it means anything, what the good of it is, I am not prepared to say. For though I have just said "there is value in dreams," I only said it to silence old Mrs. Worters.

"Go ahead, man! We can't have tea till we've got through something."

He turned his chair away from the terrace, so that he could sit looking at the meadows and at the stream that runs through the meadows, and at the beech-trees of Other Kingdom that rise beyond the stream. Then, most gravely and admirably, he began to construe the Eclogues of Virgil.

II

Other Kingdom Copse is just like any other beech copse, and I am therefore spared the fatigue of describing it. And the stream in front of it, like many other streams, is not crossed by a bridge in the right place, and you must either walk round a mile or else you must paddle. Miss Beaumont suggested that we should paddle.

Mr. Worters accepted the suggestion tumultuously. It only became evident gradually that he was not going to adopt it.

"What fun! what fun! We will paddle to your kingdom. If only—if only it wasn't for the tea-things."

"But you can carry the tea-things on your back."

"Why, yes! so I can. Or the servants could!"

"Harcourt—no servants. This is my picnic, and my wood. I'm going to settle everything. I didn't tell you: I've got all the food. I've been in the village with Mr. Ford."

"In the village——?"

"Yes. We got biscuits and oranges and half a pound of tea.

That's all you'll have. He carried them up. And he'll carry them over the stream. I want you just to lend me some tea-things—not the best ones. I'll take care of them. That's all."

"Dear creature. . . ."

"Evelyn," said Mrs. Worters, "how much did you and Jack pay for that tea?"

"For the half-pound, tenpence."

Mrs. Worters received the announcement in gloomy silence.

"Mother!" cried Mr. Worters. "Why, I forgot! How could we go paddling with mother?"

"Oh, but, Mrs. Worters, we could carry you over."

"Thank you, dearest child. I am sure you could."

"Alas! alas! Evelyn. Mother is laughing at us. She would sooner die than be carried. And alas! there are my sisters, and Mrs. Osgood: she has a cold, tiresome woman. No: we shall have to go round by the bridge."

"But some of us——" began Ford. His guardian cut him short with a quick look.

So we went round—a procession of eight. Miss Beaumont led us. She was full of fun—at least so I thought at the time, but when I reviewed her speeches afterwards I could not find in them anything amusing. It was all this kind of thing: "Single file! Pretend you're in church and don't talk. Mr. Ford, turn out your toes. Harcourt—at the bridge throw to the Naiad a pinch of tea. She has a headache. She has had a headache for nineteen hundred years." All that she said was quite stupid. I cannot think why I liked it at the time.

As we approached the copse she said, "Mr. Inskip, sing, and we'll sing after you: Áh yoù sílly àss góds lìve in woóds." I cleared my throat and gave out the abominable phrase, and we all chanted it as if it were a litany. There was something attractive about Miss Beaumont. I was not surprised that Harcourt had picked her out of "America" and had brought her home, without money, without connections, almost without antecedents, to be his bride. It was daring of him, but he knew himself to be a daring fellow. She brought him nothing; but that he could afford, he had so vast a surplus of spiritual and commercial goods. "In time," I heard him tell his mother, "in time Evelyn will repay me with interest." Meanwhile there was something attractive about her. If it was my place to like people I could have liked her very much.

"Stop singing!" she cried. We had entered the wood.

"Welcome, all of you." We bowed. Ford, who had not been laughing, bowed down to the ground. "And now be seated. Mrs. Worters—will you sit there—against that tree with a green trunk? It will show up your beautiful dress."

"Very well, dear, I will," said Mrs. Worters.

"Anna—there. Mr. Inskip next to her. Then Ruth and Mrs. Osgood. Oh, Harcourt—do sit a little forward, so that you'll hide the house. I don't want to see the house at all."

"I won't!" laughed her lover, "I want my back against a tree too."

"Miss Beaumont," asked Ford, "where shall I sit?" He was standing at attention, like a soldier.

"Oh, look at all these Worters!" she cried, "and one little Ford in the middle of them!" For she was at that state of civilisation which appreciates a pun.

"Shall I stand, Miss Beaumont? Shall I hide the house from you if I stand?"

"Sit down, Jack, you baby!" cried his guardian, breaking in with needless asperity. "Sit down!"

"He may just as well stand if he will," said she. "Just pull back your soft hat, Mr. Ford. Like a halo. Now you hide even the smoke from the chimneys. And it makes you look beautiful."

"Evelyn! Evelyn! You are too hard on the boy. You'll tire him. He's one of those book-worms. He's not strong. Let him sit down."

"Aren't you strong?" she asked.

"I am strong!" he cried. It is quite true. Ford has no right to be strong, but he is. He never did his dumb-bells or played in his school fifteen. But the muscles came. He thinks they came while he was reading Pindar.

"Then you may just as well stand, if you will."

"Evelyn! Evelyn! childish, selfish maiden! If poor Jack gets tired I will take his place. Why don't you want to see the house? Eh?"

Mrs. Worters and the Miss Worters moved uneasily. They saw that their Harcourt was not quite pleased. Theirs not to question why. It was for Evelyn to remove his displeasure, and they glanced at her.

"Well, why don't you want to see your future home? I must say—though I practically planned the house myself—that it looks very well from here. I like the gables. Miss! Answer me!"

I felt for Miss Beaumont. A home-made gable is an awful

thing, and Harcourt's mansion looked like a cottage with the dropsy. But what would she say ?

She said nothing.

" Well ? "

It was as if he had never spoken. She was as merry, as smiling, as pretty as ever, and she said nothing. She had not realised that a question requires an answer.

For us the situation was intolerable. I had to save it by making a tactful reference to the view, which, I said, reminded me a little of the country near Veii. It did not—indeed it could not, for I have never been near Veii. But it is part of my system to make classical allusions. And at all events I saved the situation.

Miss Beaumont was serious and rational at once. She asked me the date of Veii. I made a suitable answer.

" I do like the classics," she informed us. " They are so natural. Just writing down things."

" Ye—es," said I. " But the classics have their poetry as well as their prose. They're more than a record of facts."

" Just writing down things," said Miss Beaumont, and smiled as if the silly definition pleased her.

Harcourt had recovered himself. " A very just criticism," said he. " It is what I always feel about the ancient world. It takes us but a very little way. It only writes things down."

" What do you mean ? " asked Evelyn.

" I mean this—though it is presumptuous to speak in the presence of Mr. Inskip. This is what I mean. The classics are not everything. We owe them an enormous debt; I am the last to undervalue it; I, too, went through them at school. They are full of elegance and beauty. But they are not everything. They were written before men began to really feel." He coloured crimson. " Hence, the chilliness of classical art—its lack of—of a something. Whereas later things—Dante—a Madonna of Raphael—some bars of Mendelssohn——" His voice tailed reverently away. We sat with our eyes on the ground, not liking to look at Miss Beaumont. It is a fairly open secret that she also lacks a something. She has not yet developed her soul.

The silence was broken by the still small voice of Mrs. Worters saying, " Tee—ee—ee—ee ! "

The young hostess sprang up. She would let none of us help her : it was her party. She undid the basket and emptied out the biscuits and oranges from their bags, and boiled the kettle and poured out the tea, which was horrible. But we laughed and

talked with the frivolity that suits the open air, and even Mrs. Worters expectorated her flies with a smile. Over us all there stood the silent, chivalrous figure of Ford, drinking tea carefully lest it should disturb his outline. His guardian, who is a wag, chaffed him and tickled his ankles and calves.

"Well, this is nice?" said Miss Beaumont. "I am happy."

"Your wood, Evelyn!" said the ladies.

"Her wood for ever!" cried Mr. Worters. "It is an unsatisfactory arrangement, a ninety-nine years' lease. There is no feeling of permanency. I reopened negotiations. I have bought her the wood for ever—all right, dear, all right: don't make a fuss."

"But I must!" she cried. "For everything's perfect! Every one so kind—and I didn't know most of you a year ago. Oh, it is so wonderful—and now a wood—a wood of my own—a wood for ever. All of you coming to tea with me here! Dear Harcourt—dear people—and just where the house would come and spoil things, there is Mr. Ford!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Worters, and slipped his hand up round the boy's ankle. What happened I do not know, but Ford collapsed on to the ground with a sharp cry. To an outsider it might have sounded like a cry of anger or pain. We, who knew better, laughed uproariously.

"Down he goes! Down he goes!" And they struggled playfully, kicking up the mould and the dry leaves.

"Don't hurt my wood!" cried Miss Beaumont.

Ford gave another sharp cry. Mr. Worters withdrew his hand. "Victory!" he exclaimed. "Evelyn! behold the family seat!" But Miss Beaumont, in her butterfly fashion, had left us, and was strolling away into her wood.

We packed up the tea-things and then split into groups. Ford went with the ladies. Mr. Worters did me the honour to stop by me.

"Well!" he said, in accordance with his usual formula, "and how go the classics?"

"Fairly well."

"Does Miss Beaumont show any ability?"

"I should say that she does. At all events she has enthusiasm."

"You do not think it is the enthusiasm of a child? I will be frank with you, Mr. Inskip. In many ways Miss Beaumont's practically a child. She has everything to learn: she acknowledges as much herself. Her new life is so different—so strange. Our habits—our thoughts—she has to be initiated into them all."

I saw what he was driving at, but I am not a fool, and I replied: "And how can she be initiated better than through the classics?"

"Exactly, exactly," said Mr. Worters. In the distance we heard her voice. She was counting the beech-trees. "The only question is—this Latin and Greek—what will she do with it? Can she make anything of it? Can she—well, it's not as if she will ever have to teach it to others."

"That is true." And my features might have been observed to become undecided.

"Whether, since she knows so little—I grant you she has enthusiasm. But ought one not to divert her enthusiasm—say to English literature? She scarcely knows her Tennyson at all. Last night in the conservatory I read her that wonderful scene between Arthur and Guinevere. Greek and Latin are all very well, but I sometimes feel we ought to begin at the beginning."

"You feel," said I, "that for Miss Beaumont the classics are something of a luxury."

"A luxury. That is the exact word, Mr. Inskip. A luxury. A whim. It is all very well for Jack Ford. And here we come to another point. Surely she keeps Jack back? Her knowledge must be elementary."

"Well, her knowledge *is* elementary: and I must say that it's difficult to teach them together. Jack has read a good deal, one way and another, whereas Miss Beaumont, though diligent and enthusiastic——"

"So I have been feeling. The arrangement is scarcely fair on Jack?"

"Well, I must admit——"

"Quite so. I ought never to have suggested it. It must come to an end. Of course, Mr. Inskip, it shall make no difference to you, this withdrawal of a pupil."

"The lessons shall cease at once, Mr. Worters."

Here she came up to us. "Harcourt, there are seventy-eight trees. I have had such a count."

He smiled down at her. Let me remember to say that he is tall and handsome, with a strong chin and liquid brown eyes, and a high forehead and hair not at all grey. Few things are more striking than a photograph of Mr. Harcourt Worters.

"Seventy-eight trees?"

"Seventy-eight."

"Are you pleased?"

"Oh, Harcourt——!"

I began to pack up the tea-things. They both saw and heard me. It was their own fault if they did not go further.

"I'm looking forward to the bridge," said he. "A rustic bridge at the bottom, and then, perhaps, an asphalt path from the house over the meadow, so that in all weathers we can walk here dry-shod. The boys come into the wood—look at all these initials—and I thought of putting a simple fence, to prevent any one but ourselves——"

"Harcourt!"

"A simple fence," he continued, "just like what I have put round my garden and the fields. Then at the other side of the copse, away from the house, I would put a gate, and have keys—two keys, I think—one for me and one for you—not more; and I would bring the asphalt path——"

"But Harcourt——"

"But Evelyn!"

"I—I—I——"

"You—you—you——?"

"I—I don't want an asphalt path."

"No? Perhaps you are right. Cinders perhaps. Yes. Or even gravel."

"But Harcourt—I don't want a path at all. I—I—can't afford a path."

He gave a roar of triumphant laughter. "Dearest! As if you were going to be bothered! The path's part of my present."

"The wood is your present," said Miss Beaumont. "Do you know—I don't care for the path. I'd rather always come as we came to-day. And I don't want a bridge. No—nor a fence either. I don't mind the boys and their initials. They and the girls have always come up to Other Kingdom and cut their names together in the bark. It's called the Fourth Time of Asking. I don't want it to stop."

"Ugh!" He pointed to a large heart transfixed by an arrow. "Ugh! Ugh!" I suspect that he was gaining time.

"They cut their names and go away, and when the first child is born they come again and deepen the cuts. So for each child. That's how you know: the initials that go right through to the wood are the fathers and mothers of large families, and the scratches in the bark that soon close up are boys and girls who were never married at all."

"You wonderful person! I've lived here all my life and never heard a word of this. Fancy folk-lore in Hertfordshire! I must tell the Archdeacon: he will be delighted——"

"And Harcourt, I don't want this to stop."

"My dear girl, the villagers will find other trees! There's nothing particular in Other Kingdom."

"But——"

"Other Kingdom shall be for us. You and I alone. Our initials only." His voice sank to a whisper.

"I don't want it fenced in." Her face was turned to me; I saw that it was puzzled and frightened. "I hate fences. And bridges. And all paths. It is my wood. Please: you gave me the wood."

"Why, yes!" he replied, soothing her. But I could see that he was angry. "Of course. But aha! Evelyn, the meadow's mine; I have a right to fence there—between my domain and yours!"

"Oh, fence me out if you like! Fence me out as much as you like! But never in. Oh, Harcourt, never in. I must be on the outside, I must be where any one can reach me. Year by year—while the initials deepen—the only thing worth feeling—and at last they close up—but one has felt them."

"Our initials!" he murmured, seizing upon the one word which he had understood and which was useful to him. "Let us carve our initials now. You and I—a heart if you like it, and an arrow and everything. H. W.—E. B."

"H. W.," she repeated, "and E. B."

He took out his penknife and drew her away in search of an unsullied tree. "E. B., Eternal Blessing. Mine! Mine! My haven from the world! My temple of purity. Oh, the spiritual exaltation—you cannot understand it, but you will! Oh, the seclusion of Paradise. Year after year alone together, all in all to each other—year after year, soul to soul, E. B., Everlasting Bliss!"

He stretched out his hand to cut the initials. As he did so she seemed to awake from a dream. "Harcourt!" she cried, "Harcourt! What's that? What's that red stuff on your finger and thumb?"

III

Oh, my goodness! Oh, all ye goddesses and gods! Here's a mess. Mr. Worters has been reading Ford's inflammatory note-book.

"It is my own fault," said Ford. "I should have labelled it 'Practically Private.' How could he know he was not meant to look inside?"

I spoke out severely, as an *employé* should. "My dear boy,

none of that. The label came unstuck. That was why Mr. Worters opened the book. He never suspected it was private. See—the label's off."

"Scratched off," Ford retorted grimly, and glanced at his calf.

I affected not to understand. "The point is this. Mr. Worters is thinking the matter over for four-and-twenty hours. If you take my advice you will apologise before that time elapses."

"And if I don't ?"

"You know your own affairs of course. But don't forget that you are young and practically ignorant of life, and that you have scarcely any money of your own. As far as I can see, your career practically depends on the favour of Mr. Worters. You have laughed at him. He does not like being laughed at. It seems to me that your course is obvious."

"Apology ?"

"Complete."

"And if I don't ?"

"Departure."

He sat down on the stone steps and rested his head on his knees. On the lawn below us was Miss Beaumont, draggling about with some croquet balls. Her lover was out in the meadow, superintending the course of the asphalt path. For the path is to be made, and so is the bridge, and the fence is to be built round Other Kingdom after all. In time Miss Beaumont saw how unreasonable were her objections. Of her own accord, one evening in the drawing-room, she gave her Harcourt permission to do what he liked. "That wood looks nearer," said Ford.

"The inside fences have gone : that brings it nearer. But my dear boy—you must settle what you're going to do."

"How much has he read ?"

"Naturally he only opened the book. From what you showed me of it, one glance would be enough."

"Did he open at the poems ?"

"Poems ?"

"Did he speak of the poems ?"

"No. Were they about him ?"

"They were not about him."

"Then it wouldn't matter if he saw them."

"It is sometimes a compliment to be mentioned," said Ford, looking up at me. The remark had a stinging fragrance about it—such a fragrance as clings to the mouth after admirable wine. It did not taste like the remark of a boy. I was sorry

that my pupil was likely to wreck his career; and I told him again that he had better apologise.

"I won't speak of Mr. Worter's claim for an apology. That's an aspect on which I prefer not to touch. The point is if you don't apologise, you go—where?"

"To an aunt at Peckham."

I pointed to the pleasant, comfortable landscape, full of cows and carriage-horses out at grass, and civil retainers. In the midst of it stood Mr. Worters, radiating energy and wealth, like a terrestrial sun. "My dear Ford—don't be heroic! Apologise."

Unfortunately I raised my voice a little, and Miss Beaumont heard me, down on the lawn.

"Apologise?" she cried. "What about?" And as she was not interested in the game, she came up the steps towards us, trailing her croquet mallet behind her. Her walk was rather listless. She was toning down at last.

"Come indoors!" I whispered. "We must get out of this.'

"Not a bit of it!" said Ford.

"What is it?" she asked, standing beside him on the step.

He swallowed something as he looked up at her. Suddenly I understood. I knew the nature and the subject of his poems. I was not so sure now that he had better apologise. The sooner he was kicked out of the place the better.

In spite of my remonstrances, he told her about the book, and her first remark was: "Oh, do let me see it!" She had no "proper feeling" of any kind. Then she said: "But why do you both look so sad?"

"We are awaiting Mr. Worters' decision," said I.

"Mr. Inskip! What nonsense! Do you suppose Harcourt'll be angry?"

"Of course he is angry, and rightly so."

"But why?"

"Ford has laughed at him."

"But what's that!" And for the first time there was anger in her voice. "Do you mean to say he'll punish some one who laughs at him? Why, for what else—for whatever reason are we all here? Not to laugh at each other! I laugh at people all day. At Mr. Ford. At you. And so does Harcourt. Oh, you've misjudged him! He won't—he couldn't be angry with people who laughed."

"Mine is not nice laughter," said Ford. "He could not well forgive me."

"You're a silly boy." She sneered at him. "You don't know Harcourt. So generous in every way. Why he'd be as

furious as I should be, if you apologised. Mr. Inskip, isn't that so ? "

" He has every right to an apology, I think."

" Right ? What's a right ? You use too many new words. ' Rights '—' apologies '—' society '—' position '—I don't follow it. What are we all here for, anyhow ? "

Her discourse was full of trembling lights and shadows—frivolous one moment, the next moment asking why Humanity is here. I did not take the Moral Science Tripos, so I could not tell her.

" One thing I know—and that is that Harcourt isn't as stupid as you two. He soars above conventions. He doesn't care about ' rights ' and ' apologies.' He knows that all laughter is nice, and that the other nice things are money and the soul and so on."

The soul and so on ! I wonder that Harcourt out in the meadows did not have an apoplectic fit.

" Why, what a poor business your life would be," she continued, " if you all kept taking offence and apologising ! Forty million people in England and all of them touchy ! How one would laugh if it was true ! Just imagine ! " And she did laugh. " Look at Harcourt though. He knows better. He isn't petty like that. Mr. Ford ! He isn't petty like that. Why, what's wrong with your eyes ? "

He rested his head on his knees again, and we could see his eyes no longer. In dispassionate tones she informed me that she thought he was crying. Then she tapped him on the hair with her mallet and said : " Cry-baby ! Cry-cry-baby ! Crying about nothing ! " and ran laughing down the steps. " All right ! " she shouted from the lawn. " Tell the cry-baby to stop. I'm going to speak to Harcourt ! "

We watched her go in silence. Ford had scarcely been crying. His eyes had only become large and angry. He used such swear-words as he knew, and then got up abruptly, and went into the house. I think he could not bear to see her disillusioned. I had no such tenderness, and it was with considerable interest that I watched Miss Beaumont approach her lord.

She walked confidently across the meadow, bowing to the workmen as they raised their hats. Her languor had passed, and with it her suggestion of " tone." She was the same crude, unsophisticated person that Harcourt had picked out of America—beautiful and ludicrous in the extreme, and—if you go in for pathos—extremely pathetic.

I saw them meet, and soon she was hanging on his arm. The motion of his hand explained to her the construction of

bridges. Twice she interrupted him : he had to explain everything again. Then she got in her word, and what followed was a good deal better than a play. Their two little figures parted and met and parted again, she gesticulating, he most pompous and calm. She pleaded, she argued and—if satire can carry half a mile—she tried to be satirical. To enforce one of her childish points she made two steps back. Splash ! She was floundering in the little stream.

That was the *dénouement* of the comedy. Harcourt rescued her, while the workmen crowded round in an agitated chorus. She was wet quite as far as her knees, and muddy over her ankles. In this state she was conducted towards me, and in time I began to hear words ; " Influenza—a slight immersion—clothes are of no consequence beside health—pray, dearest, don't worry—yes, it must have been a shock—bed ! bed ! I insist on bed ! Promise ? Good girl. Up the steps to bed then."

They parted on the lawn, and she came obediently up the steps. Her face was full of terror and bewilderment.

" So you've had a wetting, Miss Beaumont ! "

" Wetting ? Oh, yes. But, Mr. Inskip—I don't understand : I've failed."

I expressed surprise.

" Mr. Ford is to go—at once. I've failed."

" I'm sorry."

" I've failed with Harcourt. He's offended. He won't laugh. He won't let me do what I want. Latin and Greek began it : I wanted to know about gods and heroes and he wouldn't let me : then I wanted no fence round Other Kingdom and no bridge and no path—and look ! Now I ask that Mr. Ford, who has done nothing, sha'n't be punished for it—and he is to go away for ever."

" Impertinence is not 'nothing,' Miss Beaumont." For I must keep in with Harcourt.

" Impertinence is nothing ! " she cried. " It doesn't exist. It's a sham, like ' claims ' and ' position ' and ' rights.' It's part of the great dream."

" What ' great dream ' ? " I asked, trying not to smile.

" Tell Mr. Ford—here comes Harcourt ; I must go to bed. Give my love to Mr. Ford, and tell him ' to guess.' I shall never see him again, and I won't stand it. Tell him to guess. I am sorry I called him a cry-baby. He was not crying like a baby. He was crying like a grown-up person, and I too have grown up now."

I judged it right to repeat this conversation to my employer.

IV

The bridge is built, the fence finished, and Other Kingdom lies tethered by a ribbon of asphalt to our front door. The seventy-eight trees therein certainly seem nearer, and during the windy nights that followed Ford's departure we could hear their branches sighing, and would find in the morning that beech-leaves had been blown right up against the house. Miss Beaumont made no attempt to go out, much to the relief of the ladies, for Harcourt had given the word that she was not to go out unattended, and the boisterous weather deranged their petticoats. She remained indoors, neither reading nor laughing, and dressing no longer in green, but in brown.

Not noticing her presence, Mr. Worters looked in one day and said with a sigh of relief: "That's all right. The circle's completed."

"Is it indeed!" she replied.

"You there, you quiet little mouse? I only meant that our lords, the British workmen, have at last condescended to complete their labours, and have rounded us off from the world. I—in the end I was a naughty, domineering tyrant, and disobeyed you. I didn't have the gate out at the further side of the copse. Will you forgive me?"

"Anything, Harcourt, that pleases you, is certain to please me."

The ladies smiled at each other, and Mr. Worters said: "That's right, and as soon as the wind goes down we'll all process together to your wood, and take possession of it formally, for it didn't really count that last time."

"No, it didn't really count that last time," Miss Beaumont echoed.

"Evelyn says this wind never will go down," remarked Mrs. Worters. "I don't know how she knows."

"It will never go down, as long as I am in the house."

"Really?" he said gaily. "Then come out now, and send it down with me."

They took a few turns up and down the terrace. The wind lulled for the moment, but blew fiercer than ever during lunch. As we ate, it roared and whistled down the chimney at us, and the trees of Other Kingdom frothed like the sea. Leaves and twigs flew from them, and a bough, a good-sized bough, was blown on to the smooth asphalt path, and actually switch-backed over the bridge, up the meadow, and across our very

lawn. (I venture to say "our," as I am now staying on as Harcourt's private secretary.) Only the stone steps prevented it from reaching the terrace and perhaps breaking the dining-room window. Miss Beaumont sprang up and, napkin in hand, ran out and touched it.

"Oh, Evelyn——" the ladies cried.

"Let her go," said Mr. Worters tolerantly. "It certainly is a remarkable incident, remarkable. We must remember to tell the Archdeacon about it."

"Harcourt," she cried, with the first hint of returning colour in her cheeks, "mightn't we go up to the copse after lunch, you and I?"

Mr. Worters considered.

"Of course, not if you don't think best."

"Inskip, what's your opinion?"

I saw what his own was, and cried, "Oh, let's go!" though I detest the wind as much as any one.

"Very well. Mother, Anna, Ruth, Mrs. Osgood—we'll all go."

And go we did, a lugubrious procession; but the gods were good to us for once, for as soon as we were started, the tempest dropped, and there ensued an extraordinary calm. After all, Miss Beaumont was something of a weather prophet. Her spirits improved every minute. She tripped in front of us along the asphalt path, and ever and anon turned round to say to her lover some gracious or alluring thing. I admired her for it. I admire people who know on which side their bread's buttered.

"Evelyn, come here!"

"Come here yourself."

"Give me a kiss."

"Come and take it then."

He ran after her, and she ran away, while all our party laughed melodiously.

"Oh, I am so happy!" she cried. "I think I've everything I want in all the world. Oh dear, those last few days indoors! But oh, I am so happy now!" She had changed her brown dress for the old flowing green one, and she began to do her skirt dance in the open meadow, lit by sudden gleams of the sunshine. It was really a beautiful sight, and Mr. Worters did not correct her, glad perhaps that she should recover her spirits, even if she lost her tone. Her feet scarcely moved, but her body so swayed and her dress spread so gloriously around her, that we were transported with joy. She danced to the song of a bird that sang passionately in Other Kingdom, and the river held

back its waves to watch her (one might have supposed), and the winds lay spell-bound in their cavern, and the great clouds spell-bound in the sky. She danced away from our society and our life, back, back through the centuries till houses and fences fell and the earth lay wild to the sun. Her garment was as foliage upon her, the strength of her limbs as boughs, her throat the smooth upper branch that salutes the morning or glistens to the rain. Leaves move, leaves hide it as hers was hidden by the motion of her hair. Leaves move again and it is ours, as her throat was ours again when, parting the tangle, she faced us crying, "Oh!" crying, "Oh Harcourt! I never was so happy. I have all that there is in the world."

But he, entrammelled in love's ecstasy, forgetting certain Madonnas of Raphael, forgetting, I fancy, his soul, sprang to inarm her with, "Evelyn! Eternal Bliss! Mine to eternity! Mine!" and she sprang away. Music was added and she sang, "Oh Ford! oh Ford, among all these Worters, I am coming through you to my Kingdom. Oh Ford, my lover while I was a woman, I will never forget you, never, as long as I have branches to shade you from the sun," and, singing, crossed the stream.

Why he followed her so passionately, I do not know. It was play, she was in his own domain which a fence surrounds, and she could not possibly escape him. But he dashed round by the bridge as if all their love was at stake, and pursued her with fierceness up the hill. She ran well, but the end was a foregone conclusion, and we only speculated whether he would catch her outside or inside the copse. "I think inside," said old Mrs. Worters, who had been but little moved by the whole proceeding. "No—outside; no—inside: well in any case I consider Evelyn a queer girl." He gained on her inch by inch; now they were in the shadow of the trees; he had grasped her, he had missed; she had disappeared into the trees themselves, he following.

"Harcourt is in high spirits," said Mrs. Osgood, Anna, and Ruth.

"Evelyn!" we heard him shouting within.

We proceeded up the asphalt path.

"Evelyn! Evelyn!"

"He's not caught her yet, evidently."

"Where are you, Evelyn?"

"Miss Beaumont must have hidden herself rather cleverly."

"Look here," cried Harcourt, emerging, "have you seen Evelyn?"

"Oh, no, she's certainly inside."

"So I thought."

"Evelyn must be dodging round one of the trunks. You go this way, I that. We'll soon find her."

We searched, gaily at first, and always with the feeling that Miss Beaumont was close by, that the delicate limbs were just behind this bole, the hair and the drapery quivering among those leaves. She was beside us, above us; here was her footstep on the purple-brown earth—her bosom, her neck—she was everywhere and nowhere. Gaiety turned to irritation, irritation, to anger and fear. Miss Beaumont was apparently lost. "Evelyn! Evelyn!" we continued to cry. "Oh, really, it is beyond a joke. It's nearly tea-time."

Then the wind arose, the more violent for its lull, and we were driven into the house by a terrific storm. We said, "At all events she will come back now." But she did not come, and the rain hissed and rose up from the dry meadows like incense smoke, and smote the quivering leaves to applause. Then it lightened. Ladies screamed, and we saw Other Kingdom as one who claps the hands, and heard it as one who roars with laughter in the thunder. Not even the Archdeacon can remember such a storm. All Harcourt's seedlings were ruined, and the tiles flew off his gables right and left. He came to me presently with a white, drawn face, saying: "Inskip, can I trust you?"

"You can, indeed."

"I have thought of it; she has eloped with Ford."

"But how——" I gasped.

"The carriage is ready—we'll talk as we drive." Then, against the rain he shouted: "No gate in the fence, I know, but what about a ladder? While I blunder, she's over the fence, and he——"

"But you were so close. There was not the time."

"There is time for anything," he said venomously, "where a treacherous woman is concerned. I found her no better than a savage, I trained her, I educated her. But I'll break them both. I can do that; I'll break them soul and body."

No one can break Ford now. The task is impossible. But I trembled for Miss Beaumont.

We missed the train. Young couples had gone by it, several young couples, and we heard of more young couples in London, as if all the world was mocking Harcourt's solitude. In desperation we sought the squalid suburb that is now Ford's home. We swept past the dirty maid and the terrified aunt, swept

upstairs, to catch him if we could red-handed. He was seated the table, reading the *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophocles.

"That won't take in me!" shouted Harcourt. "You've got Miss Beaumont with you, and I know it."

"No such luck," said Ford.

He stammered with rage. "Inskip—you hear that? 'No such luck'! Quote the evidence against him. I can't speak."

So I quoted her song. "'Oh Ford! Oh Ford, among all these Worters, I am coming through you to my Kingdom! Oh Ford, my lover while I was a woman, I will never forget you, never, as long as I have branches to shade you from the sun.' Soon after that, we lost her."

"And—and on another occasion she sent a message of similar effect. Inskip, bear witness. He was to 'guess' something."

"I have guessed it," said Ford.

"So you practically——"

"Oh, no, Mr. Worters, you mistake me. I have not practically guessed; I have guessed. I could tell you if I chose, but it would be no good, for she has not practically escaped you. She has escaped you absolutely, for ever and ever, as long as there are branches to shade men from the sun."

Mirahuano

By R. B. Cunninghame Graham

Why Silvio Sanchez got the name of Mirahuano was difficult to say. Perhaps for the same reason that the Arabs call lead "the light," for certainly he was the blackest of his race, a tall, lop-sided negro, with elephantine ears, thick lips, teeth like a narwhale's tusks, and Mirahuano is a cottony, white stuff used to fill cushions, and light as thistledown. Although he was so black and so uncouth, he had the sweetest smile imaginable, and through his eyes, which at first sight looked hideous, with their saffron-coloured whites, there shone a light, as if a spirit chained in the dungeon of his flesh, was struggling to be free. A citizen of a republic in which by theory all men were free and equal by the law, the stronger canon enacted by humanity, confirmed by prejudice, and enforced by centuries of use, had set a bar between him and his white brethren in the Lord, which nothing, neither his talents, lovable nature, nor the esteem of every one who knew him, could ever draw aside. Fate having doubly cursed him with a black skin and an aspiring intellect, he passed his life, just as a fish might live in an aquarium, or a caged bird, if they had been brought up to think intelligently on their lost liberty.

The kindly customs of the republic, either derived from democratic Spain or taken unawares from the gentler races of the New World, admitted him, partly by virtue of his talents, for he was born a poet, in a land where all write verses, on almost equal terms to the society of men. Still there were little differences that they observed as if by instinct, almost involuntarily, due partly to the lack of human dignity conspicuous in his race; a lack which in his case, as if the very powers of nature were in league against him, seemed intensified, and made him, as it were, on one hand an archetype, so negroid that he almost seemed an ape, and yet in intellect superior to the majority of those who laughed at him. No one was ever heard to call him Don, and yet the roughest muleteer from Antióquia claimed and

received the title as a right, as soon as he had made sufficient money to purchase a black coat.

In the interminable sessions in the *cafés*, where men sat talking politics by hours, or broached their theories at great length, on poetry, on international law, on government, on literature and art, with much gesticulation, and with their voices raised to their highest pitch—for arguments are twice as cogent when delivered shrilly, and with much banging on the table—the uncouth negro did not suffer in his pride, for there he shouted with the rest, and plunged into a world of dialectics with the best of them. His Calvary came later, for when at last the apologetic Genoese who kept the *café*, politely told his customers that it was time to close, and all strolled out together through the arcaded, silent streets built by the Conquerors, and stood about for a last wrangle in the plaza, under the China trees, as sometimes happened, one or two would go away together to finish off their talk at home. Then Mirahuano silently would walk away, watching the fireflies flash about the bushes, and with a friendly shout of " Buenas noches, Mirahuano " ringing in his ears from the last of his companions as they stood on the threshold of their houses, holding the door wide open by the huge, iron knocker, screwed high up, so that a man upon his mule could lift it easily.

Beyond that threshold he was never asked, except on business, for there dwelt the white women, who were at once his adoration and despair. With them no talents, no kindliness or generosity of character, had any weight. They treated him, upon the rare occasions when he recited verses of his own composition at some function, with grave courtesy, for it was due to their own self-respect to do so, but as a being of another generation to themselves, who had, for so their priests informed them, an immortal soul, which after death, might be as worthy of salvation as their own, in its Creator's eyes.

He, though he knew exactly his position, midway between that of the higher animals and man, was yet unable to resist the peculiar fascination that a white woman seems to have for those of coloured blood. Those of his friends who had his interests at heart, and were admirers of his talents, argued in vain, and pointed out that he was certain to bring trouble on his head if he attempted to presume upon his education and tried to be accepted as a man.

His means permitted him to live a relatively idle life, and as he read all kinds of books in French and Spanish, his intellect always expanded, and it was natural enough that he should think

himself the equal of the best, unless he happened to take up a looking-glass, and saw the injustice which from his birth, both God and man had wrought upon him. As now and then he published poems, which, in a country where all write, were still above the average of those his brethren in the muses penned (for all the whiteness of their skins), his name was noised abroad, and he was styled in newspapers the Black Alcæus, the Lute of Africa, and a variety of other epithets, according to the lack of taste of those who make all things ridiculous which their fell pens approach.

The Floral Games were due. On such occasions, poets write on themes such as "To the Immortal Memory of the Liberator," or dedicate their lyrics to the "Souls of those who fell at Mancavélica," or simply head their stuff, "Dolores," "Una Flor Marchita," or something of the sort. Poets of all dimensions leave their counting-houses, banks, regiments, and public offices, and with their brows all "wreathed in roses," as the local papers say, flock to the "flowery strife." All are attired in black, all wear tall hats, and all bear white kid gloves, sticky with heat, and generally a size or two too large for those who carry them.

Each poet in the breast-pocket of his long frock-coat has a large roll of paper in which in a clear hand are written out the verses that are to make his name immortal, and crown his brow with flowers.

Now and again their hands steal furtively to touch the precious scrolls, just as a man riding at night in dangerous country, now and then feels at the butt of his revolver to assure himself that it is there, when his horse pricks his ears, or any of the inexplicable, mysterious noises of the night perplex and startle him. On this occasion, after the other sports, the running at the ring, the feats of horsemanship, in which men stopped their horses short, before a wall, making them rear and place their feet upon the top, the tailing of the bulls, and all the other feats which Spanish Americans love to train their horses to perform, were over, the poets all advanced. In the fierce sun they marched, looking a little like a band of undertaker's mutes at an old-fashioned funeral, and stood in line before the jury, and each man in his turn read out his verses, swelling his voice, and rolling all the adjectives, like a delicious morsel, on his tongue. The audience now and then burst out into applause, when some well-worn and well-remembered tag treating of liberty, calling upon the Muses for their help, or speaking of the crimson glow, like blood of the oppressor, which tinged the Andean snows, making them blush incarnadine, or when a stanza dwelling on

alabaster bosoms, teeth white as pearls, and eyes as black as those the Houris flash in Paradise, struck their delighted ears. All read and stood aside to wait, looking a little sourly on their fellow-competitors, or with their eyes fixed on a girl, the daughter of a Senator, who, dressed in white, sat in a box, beside her father, ready to crown the successful poet with a limp wreath of flowers. The last to read was Mirahuano, and the Master of the Ceremonies, after due clearing of his throat, read out his title, "Movements of the Soul." Holding his hat in his left hand, and with the perspiration, which in a negro looks white and revolting to our eyes, standing in beads upon his face, and in the thick and guttural tones of all his race, the poet nervously began.

At first the audience maintained that hostile air which every audience puts on to those it does not know. This gradually gave place to one of interest, as it appeared the verses all ran smoothly; and this again altered to interest as the figure of the uncouth negro grew familiar to them. As he read on, tracing the movements of the soul, confined and fettered in the flesh, lacking advancement in its due developement owing to circumstances affecting not itself, but the mere prison of the body, a prison that it must endure perforce, so that it may be born, and which it leaves unwillingly at last, so strong is habit, even to the soul, the listeners recognised that they were listening to a poet, and gazed upon him in astonishment, just as the men of Athens may have gazed on the mean-looking little Jew, who, beckoning with his head, after the manner of the natural orator, compelled their silence in the Agora. The poet finished in a blaze of rhetoric after the fashion that the Latin race in the republics of America demands, depicting a free soul, freed from the bonds that race, sex, or conditions have imposed on it, free to enjoy, to dare, to plan, free to work out its own salvation, free to soar upwards and to love.

He ceased, and a loud "Viva!" rent the air, and though some of the men of property were evidently shocked at the implied intrusion of a mere negro soul into an Empyrean, where their own would soon have atrophied, the poor, and all the younger generation—for in America, whatever men become in after-life, in youth they are all red republicans—broke out into applause.

Long did the jury talk the poems over, weighing judiciously the pros and cons, but from the first it was quite clear that Mirahuano's composition would receive most votes.

Again the Master of the Ceremonies stood up, and in dead

silence, proclaimed the prize had been adjudged to Señor Sanchez and that he was requested to step forward and be crowned.

Shoving his papers hastily into his pocket, and clinging to his hat, just as a drowning sailor clutches fast a plank, the poet shuffled up towards the box in which the jury sat, and stood half proudly, half shamefacedly, to listen to the set oration which the President of the Floral Games stood ready to pronounce. Clearing his throat, he welcomed to Parnassus' heights another poet. He was proud that one of their own town had won the prize. The Muses all rejoiced; Apollo had re-strung his lyre and now stretched out his hand to welcome in the son of Africa. The eternal verities stood once more justified; liberty, poetry, and peace had their true home in the Republic. Europe might boast its Dantes and Shakkispers, its Lopes, Ariostos, and the rest, but Costaguano need not fear their rivalry, whilst poets such as Mira—he should say as Silvio Sanchez—still raised their pæans to the great and indivisible.

He could say more, much more, but words, what were they in the face of genius?—so he would bring his discourse to a close by welcoming again the youngest brother of the lyre into the Muses' court. Now he would call upon the fairest of the fair, the Señorita Nieves Figueroa, to place the laurel on the poet's brow.

Applause broke out, rather constrainedly, and chiefly amongst those who by the virtue of their station were able to express their feelings easily, really liked Mirahuano, and possibly admired the poem they had heard, that is as much of it as they had understood.

Dressed all in white, with a mantilla of white lace upon her head, fastened high on her hair to a tall comb, shy and yet self-possessed, the Señorita Nieves Figueroa advanced, holding a crown of laurel leaves, with a large silver ornament, shaped like a lyre, in front of it, and with long ribbons of the national colours hanging down behind. Her jet-black hair was glossy as a raven's wing. Her olive skin and almond eyes were thrown into relief by her white clothes, and gave her somewhat of the air of a fly dropped in milk, or a black bird in snow. Clearly she was embarrassed by the appearance of the man she had to crown, who, on his side, stood quivering with excitement at his victory, and the approach of the young girl.

Raising the crown, she placed it on the negro's head, where it hung awkwardly, half covering his eyes, and giving him the look as of a bull, when a skilled bull-fighter has placed a pair of banderillas in his neck. Murmuring something about the Muses,

poetry, and a lyre, she gracefully stepped back, and Mirahuano shuffled off, having received, as he himself observed, " besides the wreath, an arrow in his heart."

From that day forth he was her slave, that is in theory, for naturally he never had the chance to speak to her, although no doubt she heard about his passion, and perhaps laughed with her friends about the ungainly figure she had crowned. Debarred from all chance of speech with her he called the " objective of his soul," dressed in his best, he called each Thursday morning at Señor Figueroa's house to deliver personally a copy of his verses tied with blue ribbons, at the door. The door was duly opened and the verses handed in for months, and all the town knew and talked of the infatuation of the negro poet, who for his part could have had no illusions on the subject, for from the moment of the Floral Games he had never spoken to the girl except, as he said, " by the road of Parnassus," which after all is a path, circuitous enough in matters of the heart.

His life was passed between the little house, buried in orange and banana trees, where his old mother, with her head wrapped in a coloured pocket-handkerchief, sat all the day, balanced against the wall in an old, high-backed chair, watching his sisters pounding maize in a high, hardwood mortar, with their chemises slipping off their shoulders, and the Café del Siglo, where all the poets used to spend their time.

Poets and verse-makers were as much jumbled up in people's minds in the republic as they are here, and any one who had a rhyming dictionary and the sufficient strength of wrist to wield a pen, wrote reams of stuff about the pangs of love, the moon, water, and flashing eyes, with much of liberty and dying for their native land. When they once fell into the habit, it was as hard of cure as drinking, especially as most of them had comfortable homes, though they all talked of what they underwent in the Bohemia to which they were condemned. For hours they used to sit and talk, reading their verses out to one another or with their hats drawn down upon their brows to signify their state.

To these reunions of the soul, for so they styled them, Mirahuano came, sitting a little diffidently upon his chair, and now and then reciting his own verse, which to speak truth was far above the rest of the weak, wordy trash produced so lavishly. As it cost nothing to be kind to him, for he would never take even a cup of coffee, unless he paid for it himself, they used him kindly, letting him sit and read when they were tired, help them to consonants, and generally behave as a light porter to the

Muses, as he defined it in his half-melancholy, half-philosophising vein.

One night, as they sat late, compassionating one another on their past luck, and all declaiming against envy and the indifference of a commercial world, whilst the tired waiters dozed, seated before the tables with their heads resting on the marble tops, and as the flies, mosquitoes, and the "vinchucas" made life miserable, their talk drew round towards the hypothetical Bohemia in which they dreamed they lived. Poor Mirahuano, who had sat silently wiping his face at intervals with a red pocket-handkerchief—for in common with the highest and the lowest of his kind he loved bright colours—drew near, and, sitting down among the poets, listened to their talk. The heavy air outside was filled with the rank perfume of the tropic vegetation. The fireflies flashed among the thickets of bamboos, and now and then a night-jar uttered its harsh note.

In the bright moonlight, men slept on the stucco benches in the plaza, with their faces downwards, and the whole town was silent except where now and then some traveller upon his mule passed by, the tick-tack of the footfalls of his beast, clattering rhythmically, in its artificial pace, and sending up a trail of sparks as it paced through the silent streets. Nature appeared perturbed, as she does sometimes in the tropics, and as if just about to be convulsed in the throes of a catastrophe. Inside the *café* men felt the strain, and it seemed natural to them, when Mirahuano, rising to his feet, his lips blue, and his face livid with emotion, exclaimed, "Talk of Bohemia, what is yours to mine! Mine is threefold. A poet, poor and black. The last eats up the rest, includes them, stultifies you and your lives." He paused and, no one answering, unconscious that the waiters awakened by his tones were looking at him, half in alarm, half in amazement, broke out again. "Bohemia! Think of my life; my very God is white, made in your image, imposed upon my race by yours. His menacing pale face has haunted me from childhood, hard and unsympathetic, and looking just as if He scorned us whom you call His children, although we know it is untrue. Your laws are all a lie. His too, unless it is that you have falsified them in your own interests and to keep us slaves."

Seizing his hat, he walked out of the *café* without a salutation, leaving the company dumb with amazement, looking upon each other as the inhabitants of some village built on the slopes of a volcano long quiescent, may look, when from the bowels of the sleeping mountain a stream of lava shoots into the sky. His brothers in the Muses missed him from his accustomed haunts for

two or three days, and then a countryman reported he had seen in the backwater of a stream, an object which he had thought was a dead bullock or a cow. Wishing to secure the hide, he had lassoed it, and to his great astonishment he found it was the body of a negro, dressed in black clothes, as he said, just as good as those worn by the President. Being of a thrifty turn of mind, he had stripped them off and sold them at a pulperia, when he had dried them in the sun.

It seemed to him fortuitous that a black rascal, who in all his life had never done a stroke of work, but walked about, just like a gentleman, making a lot of silly rhymes, at last should be of use to a white Christian such as he was himself, white, as the proverb says, on all four sides.

He added, as he stood beside his half-wild colt, keeping a watchful eye upon its eye, and a firm hand upon his raw-hide halter, that as a negro's hide was of no value, he pushed the body back into the stream, and had no doubt that it would soon be eaten up by the caimáns.

Illumination

By Gertrude Bone

His coming like the morn shall be,
Like morning songs His voice.

On a late day I stood on a hill-ridge under the shadow of a mountain and watched the Winter sunlight on the plain below. The country was stained to deep colour by the rains. The light of the snow still trembled about the heads of the mountains, and the air, liquid and fine, was like a clear pool washing a coloured and golden bed. The plain under the lifted sky was vivid and dark, and the sunshine seemed to be poured upon it, not lavishly, but carefully, deliberately, in kindly places; like some molten stuff of the spirit, or like some hoarded and precious life spilled sacrificially.

So I stood, on the hither side of grief, and looked across my own life, a level and inexpressive tract laid bare to the unstable sky, and saw, in such a figure, the moments of expressiveness or vision by the frequency of which alone one counts the value of life. I recalled the day when a shaft of sunlight lying upon a green field was a sight to bring stillness to my thoughts, when the clamour of the trees affected me like music, when the song of a bird in the tree was revealed, when the beaten sands and level escape of the sea filled my eye and mind with satisfaction; and my thoughts sank deeper still into the remembrance of all that has had power to move the heart of such as I since the world was; water moving, and hills folded close; bowing woods, and meadows open to the sky, and secret inland springs; the sufficiency of the sea and stars; the texture and variety of the clouds; the colour and solemnity of dawn and twilight.

I remember how, standing in the midst of these things, and attentive to their revelation, I first received from without the Idea of God.

It happened in the ordinary miracle of life, when I was reading Hebrew with a Jewish teacher. We were to begin that night the book of Isaiah. "I know nothing about him," I said. "I must find out something." I took a book from the shelf,

one of two purple volumes, and read, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

I searched no more. "Yes, that is God," I assented, and replaced the book. It seemed a sublime inheritance; Holiness instant and active to consume insincerity and uncleanness, and to prove by vigilant heat the stable and precious metal of the soul. If one thought of worship, here was a Being worthy of the Throne. Just as in a conversion, each, with a particularity of importance for himself alone, and in no two with the same circumstances predominating, ventures alone towards the attraction of God, so I received, in the sole place where quiet was guarded in my heart, the first vibration of His Spirit, entering timidly like the dawn within the amplitude of the night, an alien insecure of a greeting.

But I had no thought of worship. I wrapped myself about with love of the earth. I watched the fields created anew in the dawn, and the city built turret by turret against the sky. I heard the long love-calls of the birds in Spring, looked into the heart of the poised waves, and wandered along the slopes of the quiet hills where the shadows lie early in the afternoon. I became the lover of the grass, the ploughed earth, and the trees with their flocks of singing birds, and saw with rejoicing the light taming the sea, and weaving in the sky tapestries with windy edges, and in the fields dwelling-places for itself with shadows and luminous colours. I knew the first sunshine which the hidden buds feel in the stem and the first morning when the hills throw other shadows than those of the clouds, and listened in the enchanted dawn when the earth first becomes musical. But one day Death from a single part of my life spread like a cloud to all, and, as I waited in blindness, the pillar of cloud turned on me a flaming heart, and I had met the God of everlasting burnings.

If the jealousy of His Holiness would only consume sin, of which I would gladly be rid! But it mounted to my holy things, to love, to motherhood, to joy in beauty. It burnt down the door of the sanctuary in which I had hidden myself, and searched for me. I was forced to come out and endure the pain of burning.

I had no way of speech with Him, but having heard one word of the most ancient speech which is the Voice of God, my mind let go its acquired and artificial language, stooping to the painful obedience of a new learning, entering the silence, dumb, anguished, bent on enunciating only such words as the silence and pressure of God's contact evoked.

ILLUMINATION

It was suggested to me that by prayer was the readiest access to Him, and by attentive hearing of His Word. I bent to pray, bringing words which would be acceptable, and I heard the answer of God.

"Is that indeed thine own prayer thou hast offered? Dost thou then wish for faith and humility and desire to do My will?"

"I think so, O God."

"Dost thou think that words can hide thee from My Holiness? If thou dost stand before Me it must be thyself thou must bring. I do not want that which thou dost wish me to see, nor to hear the prayers full of words and desires. Pray, what is indeed in thy heart?"

"I want to be great, to be loved, to be admired, and I am afraid of thee, O God."

"Yes, that is thine own prayer. I will put another one in thy mouth. Thou shalt pray it until thou hast learned its meaning. 'From the unhappy desire to be great, deliver me, O Lord my God.' Take that and pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' But bring to Me always what is in thy heart, thy sin, thy failure, thy disbelief, thy faintest wish to be better. Has any a wish to hear of these but Me? Has any patience to guide thy waywardness but Me? But if thou dost indeed come before Me, bring Me thine own heart, and not another."

I approached this way with gladness, it seeming easy and not forbidding. I brought Him my insincerity of desire to worship Him; but each time I came to tell Him of it I was a little more ashamed. I brought to Him failure and sin, and said, "There is forgiveness with Thee." So He forgave again and again, and then I saw "Forgiveness—that Thou mayest be feared."

I took what they called His "Word." The Scriptures were very beautiful. The sayings of Jesus were maxims of high living, the devotion of the apostles sublime. Was not anything else superstitious? But as I read, recollected sentences became active.

"Seek and *ye* shall find."

"Knock and it shall be opened unto *you*."

"For every one that asketh *receiveth*, and he that seeketh *findeth*."

If that was all, I would ask, I would seek. But I found it a flaming sword turning both ways and guarding the Kingdom.

"Are ye able to drink of the cup? Ye shall drink indeed of My cup."

"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom."

"Which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost?"

"To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required"; and I turned to God Who spoke.

"What *is* the cost, what *is* the cup, O God? How can I tell unless I know?"

"*I* measure the price. *I* fill the cup. Is not this enough?"

"O God, with shame and misgiving I say to Thee, No."

"No one looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."

"Wilt Thou show me a little at a time, O God? What dost Thou want?"

"Wilt thou tell openly of My Love to thee and the Light that purifies thy life?"

"Ah, *that?* They will laugh."

"Yes, they may laugh."

"They will say it is preposterous—an obsession."

"Yes, they may say that too."

"What can I tell, O God, who know so little of Thee? I have no words for this. My words belong to other matters not so high or hidden."

"Have I spoken no words to thy heart?"

"Ah, not my heart, Lord God. I cannot give my heart to be laughed at."

"*I* have scorn and mocking and disobedience all day for My portion. Dost thou not care that they laugh at Me?"

I turned to my reading again.

"The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread."

"Not the traitor's name, O Lord! I am loyal. Surely I am loyal."

"Thou so loyal, dost thou take gifts and not give thanks?"

"Ungenerous and grudging, is that I?"

"Stand in the light and look."

"Yes, it is I; I am ashamed."

I took and wrote, and then turned to worship. It was the time of the Winter Sacrament. It seemed as though God said, "There is prayer. There is the Word. There is yet another way of access to Me, in fellowship, and confession of My Name. Draw nigh unto Me, and I will draw nigh unto you. 'With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with *you*, with you also.'"

The preparation evening came. Surely in this was the heart of the mystery, the symbols of Life given, Life communicated. A feast in which the elements were figures of Life rising from its own perishing, Love spent for the life of the world.

ILLUMINATION

I entered the little church with hope and eagerness, coming in out of the dark village street. The white cloths were spread over the book-boards and the lamps were lit. Some old people sat with anticipant faces, one old man visibly beautiful. Some girls and one or two young farmers sat attentive. Three boys came in clumsily, and then sat very still, and two little children found their way to their mother, and, each leaning a head against her on either side, fell fast asleep. A quiet man came and sat beside me. There was unusual quiet, without movement or shuffling. These were the simple in heart who were to see God, and show forth the Lord's death till He come. The pity and beauty of such a commemoration filled my mind.

Suddenly, as if darkness had filled the church, I became aware that this was not preparation for communion with God, but an artistic sensation, and I shrank away disappointed.

"O God, how hard it is for my faith to climb even to Thy footstool! Grant that the pity and beauty of the worship may not keep my soul from Thee, its first need and hope. How can I worship unless Thou teach me? My eyes are entangled with other visions and my mind hindered by outside thoughts. God of everlasting burnings, let the wrappings be removed, and show me, I beseech Thee, the heart of love within."

On the Sunday of communion I took my place with fear. I dared not look at the congregation. The elders brought in the elements and were seated at the table. The minister broke the bread. The same quiet man sat next to me. He broke the bread and passed it to me. I broke and ate. He passed the cup, and I drank.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," said the minister; but the quiet for me was not peace, but emptiness. "Was the centre of the mystery blank?" I thought.

"A faith mounting to vision cannot be possible to one so blind, so slow to learn, so loth to follow. Take, then, the lowest place. Be content that thou didst obey and that the vision was open to others."

But I knew I was not content, and I could not pretend before God. I complained to Him.

"When Thou saidst, 'Seek ye My face,' my heart said unto Thee, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' Why hidest Thou Thy face from me?" But He answered at once, "Wait thou upon God."

All day I waited, and at night I turned to Him again.

"I am disappointed, O God. Show me where my obedience was lacking. May I not eat of the crumbs that fall from Thy table?"

He answered, "What *was* thy obedience? Lay it before Me and tell Me."

"It was not great, O Lord. I am ashamed it was so small."

"Thy smallest wish to obey I am ready to hear. Bring it to Me and tell Me of it."

"I came to Thy table. I ate and drank at the Supper to show forth the Lord's death till He come." And, as I said it to Him, I saw that the vision was close at hand, for that fact was my possession, and was potent, and I heard the Word of stillness and healing, "Now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh." So I was as one who sinks from the sunlight and radiant water to insecure and dark depths for a treasure, who, emerging thence, finds the sun not eclipsed nor the water darkened and the jewel safe in his hand.

But I went more and more in fear of God Who urged me so closely, and now for a time I did not see Him nor His purpose with me. All the beliefs I had held before entered my mind as an army. Was not this indeed an obsession, an influence? If I were to go away, should I not let this go as a recollection of which I should be ashamed? I prayed many times a day as I went about my work.

"Cast me not away from Thy Presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

It was then that I learnt how quick is the Word, for one said to me:

"Therefore receiving *a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.*"

"This word, 'Yet once more,' signifieth the removing of those things that may be shaken, *that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*"

There is, then, something that cannot be shaken; and at the words I received courage to approach God Whom I feared.

Show me Thy ways, O Lord,
Thy paths O teach Thou me:
And do Thou lead me in Thy truth,
Therein my teacher be.

For Thou art God that dost
To me salvation send,
And I upon Thee all the day,
Expecting do attend.

My sins and faults of youth
Do Thou, O Lord, forget:
After Thy mercy think on me,
And for Thy goodness great.

God good and upright is:
The way He'll sinners show——"

"Ah, then, I claim this, O God. Thou art good and upright and wilt show sinners the way. Show me Thy ways, O Lord." He answered in severity.

"I have taught thee another name, yet I never hear it from thee. All who worship Me pray this name but thou. Am I not thy *Father?*"

"O God, Thou hast no pity with Thy fire. That name is given in my heart to another whom I had, but have lost. He was strong and loving, with warm hands to help, with a blithe heart and courage and beauty. The remembrance of him as my father is the dearest possession I have."

"Thy father is no longer with thee. His fatherhood was for a time, and ceased. Mine is for ever, and changeth not. Am *I* not strong, with love and power to help? Leave with Me thy father, and take Me for thy protection."

"Thou art strong indeed, O God. I fear Thy strength as I fear nothing else in this world. And Thou art so far off, and showest me no love."

"Is that thy thought? Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

At that, the remembrance of the love I had lost flooded my thoughts. How could I give up this old and rooted affection for the abstraction and distance of God's Fatherhood? I saw the one I had lost living, and brave, and beautiful, and then I saw God's strength and feared Him. Yet I looked back at my beliefs so shaken and confused, and God was faithful, and I reached out towards His stability.

"*I* am thy Father, eternal in the heavens."

"O God, wilt thou take this feeble wish to believe and strengthen it? Thou art my Father. Help Thou my unbelief."

"Thou dost call one thy father, and I have taken him. I am *his* Father too. Do I not care *for him and for thee?* Did *he* withhold from Me My right? Am I not able to feed thee with living bread as I fed him?"

"Father of mercies and God of all consolation, I give my earthly father into Thy keeping and take Thee for my eternal and unchanging Father. I worship Thee. I give Thee thanks."

So by one step I had come from the removal of the things that are shaken to the security of those things which cannot be shaken, and I reached content, but not happiness, and, as I thought of God as my Father, I began to think of sin. Before the God of everlasting burnings I feared, but I did not tremble. I submitted, but raised my head. I began now to feel in His fire, not alone the scourging of Holiness, but the heat of Love, and

cast down my eyes. It seemed as though God my Father said, "Thou hast cried out against the fire of My Holiness, and hast desired My Love. Look into thine own heart and see there what *I* see, and then draw near if thou canst to *that* heat."

"I am unfit, O my Father."

"Yes, thou art unfit."

I began to think of sin. I saw a field of standing grass, comely from the root, with clear water making a gentle and shining progression through its greenness, raising itself to the grace of the air and vision of sunlight, and I watched the runnel defiled, and the grass bent by the clogged water to the contemplation of itself in the dulled stream, and yet seem content with this element and stature. I thought of the uncleanness that flowed through the holy things of a man's reason and affection.

"One would give a good deal to purify the stream," I said. "And if it appears thus to me, how must it appear to God, Who set grace and beauty in the earth?"

Then it seemed conceivable, if this thing called sin was indeed such an outrage and rending in pieces of God's holy plan, that He should desire to set once for all in the midst of the ages as it were a sovereign gesture of repudiation, immense enough to arrest, wrathful enough to appal, magnificent enough not to be gainsaid, that here in the heart of sin He should cleave one supreme stroke, and set in the sight of men the eternal and appalling paradox of God crucified. This alone of all that the mind could conceive could not be passed by for its immensity.

"Foolishness and a stumbling-block," yet seen and thought on.

God—crucified. How impossible! How sublime!

But I had not long thought on the spectacle of sin in the light of exacting Holiness before there entered into my own heart the *knowledge* of sin and the active fear of God.

This thought of mine was, then, the sublime of poetry, not the arm of Redemption. Holiness which dealt the stroke was not the remedy. Consuming Fire burned, but no hand poured healing. The judgment of God on sin was before me on Calvary. I thought of Christ.

I thought of Him as Love, shattered on the rock of the world, and filling the world with its odour.

I thought of Him as a corn of wheat, falling into the ground to die for the upright harvest of righteousness.

I saw Him bending strong shoulders to raise the world nearer to the contemplation and sight of God.

ILLUMINATION

I looked at sin again, at my own sin, and, shrinking from the Holiness of the Father, I said:

"This is not enough, O Christ. If Thou didst die on the Cross a Heroic Pattern, Thou didst die in vain. It was Love spilled to waste. Better have put it to merchandise and given it to the poor. Thou art mightily feeble indeed in Thy Death —tragic, lonely, impotent. Who can raise *me* to Thy side? Or give me again undefiled hands to offer to the Father?"

I saw Him again, outcast, hunted, scourged. Why this waste of hate upon the Sinless One? Was there, then, no righteous man in Judæa to avert the cup of malignity? Not one sinner in Galilee upon whom the wrath of God could fall?

I thought of the symbol of blood-atonement broken by its fulfilment—"a he-goat of the flock without blemish."

Ritual and poetry follow and rise to their height; does truth also? I looked at sin again, which is death, and then at Life Eternal in the Godhead. I thought of myself held down by Death, with his cold already at my heart. I thought of Another opening the veins of His life and pouring them within mine. I thought of so obstinate and rooted a Death in life, that, if I were to live, He must pour forth life to the utmost and Himself be a prey to death. But in whom can so daring a deed be righteous? In whom so tremendous a sacrifice be moral? Surely with Thee is the fountain of life. I heard the word, "Take, eat; this is My Body which is broken for the life of the world." I turned away. I said, "I cannot. If this is indeed Love it does not attract. It revolts me. This is a terrible approach to the Love of God." Another thought entered my mind.

"Thou art of purer eyes than to *behold* evil, and canst not *look* on iniquity."

"*Canst* thou, then, draw near Me and My Holiness. Is it not more impossible for a sinful heart to live in the presence of God than for Me by the casting away of My life to redeem thee from death, which *is* only sin? There is no destroyer of death save life, no covering for sin save righteousness, no justice to excuse save Redemption. There is no juster way than the way of My sovereign Love. It is impossible? Is any other possible? Look at thy heart and tell Me."

"Thou art just, O most high God."

"And the Justifier. Draw nigh, then, to My just and holy Love. Take, drink; this is My blood of the new Covenant which was shed for many unto remission of sins."

So I saw, that sovereign gesture of God against sin was one also of entreaty, and I fell before it.

"O Father, I take Thy holy and pardoning Love. From heart to brain I am weary with sin. I reach up to the Love of Thy Cross and take from Thee life instead of death, and the covering mercy of Christ for my defilement. Sufficient, abundant, and able, Thy righteousness for my sin, and Thy Love for my necessity. Let me live here, O God, lest I in leaving stray into pride and am held again from Thee by the bonds of sin. Give me the courage to love Thee and to take of Thy Life for my need."

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me? I marvel at thy slowness and unbelief. Hast thou not, while thou didst struggle to obey and to fulfil my righteousness, read often these words: 'If a man love Me he will keep My words, and *My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him*'? Why didst thou not believe My promise? 'For the Father Himself loveth you.' Didst thou not read that with blind heart? 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all *these things shall be added unto you.*' Was it My fault that My yoke was heavy when thou didst not take the strength of My promise with it? Thou hast wished for peace. Dost thou not read this: 'My peace I *give* unto you'? Why dost thou not *take* it?"

"O God, forgive my slowness of heart. I *take* Thy Peace, and it is indeed mine."

"The fruit of the Spirit for which thou didst pray is righteousness, peace, joy. I have led thee into the paths of righteousness. Thou hast taken my gift of Peace. There is yet a third gift of joy. Thou art a woman and the mother of sons. Seek and ye shall find the tenderness that I have towards thee."

"Ah, Lord God, I see already. I see the lonely and fated figure of all the world—a woman in travail. I see the eyes of all bent in pity upon her because of the curse of sorrow in labour. Thou hast spoken graciously. Thou hast loved freely and of Thine own heart of compassion. Thou dost set Thine eyes steadfastly towards the cross of Redemption. But before Thou goest out alone where none follow Thee, Thou dost speak of triumphant Joy; and Thy symbol of Joy is no blithe and happy conqueror among men, but a travailing woman. In all times and all peoples she has bowed to her pains, a figure of sorrow. At Thy cross of mercy Thou dost turn again and raise her up, an eternal symbol of Joy."

ILLUMINATION

"Wilt thou take this Joy whose symbol thou dost understand?"

"O generous Love, I take it."

"Thy joy no man taketh from thee. Thou didst give Me thy words. I give them back to thee now to do as thou dost choose."

"May I tell of Thy Love to me, O God?"

"Will they not laugh?"

"It may be so, O God."

"They will see thy heart. Dost thou not care for this?"

"I do not think I care at all, Lord God. It is so happy."

The Open Season

By C. L. Marson

The first day of the open season for coarse fishing is of more importance to anglers than any other date in the calendar. For one thing it is a universal date. On one single welcome and blessed morning every lake, pond, and river becomes accessible to the general, whereas game fishes are to be approached, if at all, at different dates in different spots. For another, the coarse fishing (odious and absurd term) is the recreation of the unleisured and unlanguid classes, whose lives are not satiated, but refreshed and braced, by their pleasant pastimes, who turn from arduous tasks to angling, not as one of the main businesses of their days, but as a welcome relief from their hurry and absorption, from the dust of cities, the routine of their professions or the labour of their hands and backs. What is a fortnight's salmon-fishing in Scotland to a rich and weary angler, who has the whole year and the globe at his command, compared with the week or week-end in June to the harried surgeon or the anxious tradesman who relaxes his strained fibres over barbel, pike, chub, or roach ? There is more joy over the banks and freshets of one delicious stream in June, than is expended over many miles of those keeper-haunted, costly, impracticable torrents in the first three months of their guarded splendour. It is a more universal joy. It is more anticipated. It is more intense, and, on the whole, less disputed by the event.

There is something appealing in the labour of preparation too. The trout-fisher orders a pack of flies and a fine outfit, enclosing or promising a cheque. His gear arrives by post and there he is, ready to start at a moment's notice. But the perch-fisher employs his leisure in whipping his old rod anew, varnishing it with his own sticky hands by lamplight, smoothing his gut traces with glycerine put on with finger and thumb, clenching split shot with his teeth, capping his floats. Besides he visits the scene of his joys the day before, two days before if he can filch the hours from his task-master. He has a cannister of worms with him, which the landlord's boy dug up after school hours. They

fall into the stream near the clump of figworts, in the quiet bend, and will collect he knows not what of a fresh public, ready for the serious business of to-morrow. He notices some gliding carp-like shadows among the water-lilies. He observes the circles under the alder bushes, where great logger-headed chub are rising to imaginary bees. He has clay and bran balls, which he slips in where the bank is held up by black pitched piles, now half concealed in the purple-headed grasses. These will collect the roach and give them hope and appetite without repletion. He notices where the branches are too thick to cast between the willows. The sight of half a dozen silvery fingerlings leaping in the lasher makes his colour come and go. It is a healthy, hungry pike of unimaginable poundage adding to his generous inches by unabashed feeding. He meets a fine school of small frogs in a damp corner, and pounces upon them with all the vivacity and appetite of a Frenchman. Are they not chosen meat for those same chub, when flies provoke them to mere contempt ? How pleasant too is the feeling of strangeness in the lodging or inn; the taste of the unusual bread; the sweet air, filtered by sedge grass and washed by sunny waves.

The evening passes like magic in final preparation and arrangement of the creel. The faithful Pylades has one or two new notions, which must be discussed, not without blue smoke and nightcaps—" Soda, for choice, this time of year, thank you." We go early to bed of course, and wonder if the punt will really be there at six, and say so. We also wonder if we shall be there at six, but we do not say so. It would be treasonable even to moot the idea of breakfast first; besides the fish will not be feeding at any more reasonable time, and as Socrates points out the workman must wait upon his job and not expect his job to attend his summons. Those early, pearly, dewy mornings in June are worth a little effort once in a way certainly, but the cold bath has a shrewish bite in it and bodies long debauched by comfortable coffee have skins which slightly resent the cool humours of a raw and too bracing air. Still a stout heart and stout boots send one out with a swagger, laden heavily with kit. The creel is full, but of course the bait-can, rods, and landing-net are extras. Then there is the provision basket, with loaf, butter, tea, cheese, eggs, potted something—not, one hopes, potted Chicago *employé*. Six bottles of lager, but as only three can be stuffed into the basket and one in the creel, we leave out a pair. Why are men so badly furnished with carrying muscles ? A small woman will haul a fat baby all round the fair and endure till the end. She has those mighty shoulder muscles born with her. That is why

savages, with no foolish *a priori* notions of chivalry, make the squaws carry the heavy things. Would that we had a few squaws to hand—but never mind, here we are, and there is Smith with the punt, smoking a foul clay. He has forgotten the cushions, and after tedious delays gets some darkened sacks. The pole, too, is warped, but never mind. Shall Orestes punt or Pylades ? Pylades is an athletic man and has cups on his mantelboard, so he is sure he can punt, it looks so very easy ; besides he is chilly. But the punt is perverse. It feather-stitches, lurches into the bushes, actually slows back with the tide and behaves with a saucy will of its own. Orestes is no puntsman, but a memory of old picnics on the Cherwell comes over him, and the punt trots steadily, if slowly, to the chosen ground, where a rush of fine green water laps over a pebble bank and mingles with a Greek curve of backwater. With trembling hands the rods are fitted together and we look out over the fine basin of water. Nothing is rising except some little infants below the boat, and they are twenty feet away. Never mind. Float down a tiny quill and the smallest roach-hook armed with one gentle. They will not touch it. Eighteen inches is below their plane. Try six. The rogues have sucked my gentle into a transparent rag, these ten times. At last here they are, and the bait-can begins to look frisky. How provoking that Smith failed to get us a few live bait ! The stores or Gamage would not have taken the Mundella Acts quite so seriously. But now a big red float drifts out towards the very spot where a pike was feeding yesterday. Three feet six is quite deep enough, for the water-lilies are very steadfast now, and if the triangles get among them we shall have to choose between a move or a break. A smaller red float is stealing down to the barbel swim. What bait ? A large red lob to begin with. Every fish that swims, from a sturgeon probably, or salmon more certainly, down to a dab, may take a lob ; will some day ; some other day, it generally is. For a time, an immense time measured by the spirit but a few minutes only by mundane watches, we sit and watch. Then the pike float goes down with a twitch, most joyfully, and there is a quick scratch of cogs as the line is reeled in to strike. It lifts with a flourish of silver braid, and up goes the top of the greenheart. "Hooked him ?" says a quiet voice from the end of the punt. "Yes ! but he's working your way. Never mind, I'll pull in. But bother ! I am hung up." The pike, who feels heavy and may be anything from a three-pounder to a German submarine, sails out into the centre and turns with a zigzag movement back again. Suddenly he heads for the piles, and there is an unyielding, inorganic feeling about

the rod. Perhaps he has just backed into a hole and one keeps a steady strain. Yes! he is out again. No! in again. Meantime, the barbel rod which was "hung up" grows animated. Barbel are often like that. You think you are caught in weed and pull cautiously. The fish makes no reply. Then just as you are lightly fooling with the supposed pond weed, he makes a plunging rush and will test your skill most cleverly. One's first barbel nearly always accomplishes a jerk, and robs one of something more than hope and a little tackle. He carries off his weight of equanimity—his supposed weight, that is, which is in generous measure. But this one is not a first barbel, and his rush is allowed for. What is he doing? He has plunged, another barbel device, and is mouthing at something vegetable on the bottom; but it gives and he sails slowly to and fro, and at last his sides show green and he comes towards the landing-net. But he has no present intention of giving in, and he canters out almost to the middle of the bay, and back again. This time he comes weakly; and a fine bearded ancient of five pounds and a half is soon flapping on the floor. But the pike? The pike has transferred the triangles to a great pile, not to be coaxed out of its situation. The problem is, shall we move the punt to recover? or shall we break? or shall we leave the pike rod where it is and try for more barbel? A glance at the great gasping fish, over two feet in length by the look of him, determines us upon the last, and soon two more large lobs float out towards these gudgeon-like Anakim. They are welcomed most warmly, and two lesser barbel, nephews by the look of them, join their heavy uncle. Then one, a two-pounder, then after a long interval a one-pounder, and then they take no more interest in us and our wooing. Has the school gone? or obtained some saving wisdom? or has every member breakfasted to the full? Probably none of these things, for fishes obey laws which are too fine for our coarse guesses to measure. They will feed gently for an hour, furiously for a few minutes, gently again. Then just as you despair—*crescendo*, they rush like investors taking up a good Government gilt-edged thing. Then in mid-rush they halt and are off their feed with sudden and decided resolution. They take a drastic pledge, as it were, against worm meat or any carnal delight and sink quiescent to the bottom in ascetic contemplation. It is now half-past nine and we remember that a meal of some sort must be taken, so we unhitch the pike hooks and land among the long, heavy-headed grasses, large daisies and yellow rattle, and with mouths full discuss the next move. I shall try a coachman fly under those alder bushes. But they will not take

a coachman this time of day. Yes, you are thinking of trout; but these are chub. Chub, when the wind is east and the sky spotted, usually take a coachman any time. I do not believe it; so I shall play for roach where the waters join. Very well! but bring the punt in when I holloa. After this Ollendorfian dialogue the rods part company. One, a dark greenheart, leaps in the sunlight, and the other, the barbel rod with a longer top, lies in the shadow of the trees against the punt-side. The latter has a long appendix of line and then a fine sweep of gut, a porcupine float and half a dozen gentles for bait, with a hazel-nut-sized lump of bran and clay over its one shot. The roach do bite, but very shyly, and it is a true test for eye and muscle to land them, five or six to the hour, and then they are none of them food for fame and fable. In fact they fit the bait-can better than the bag. As it gets nearer high noon they become visibly more languid. The secret is this, that pike dine at noon. This is a fact well known in rivers, but less notorious by them. The birds and beasts of prey in all the elements are much more regular in their meal-times than our hawkers, hunters, and anglers suspect. They keep the old night-watches, and at every change of guard (six, nine, twelve, three, and six) hold themselves ready for a meal, if their last one has not been too much of a banquet. But they prefer dark nights to moony ones, and when there is a silvery radiance everywhere, and always in the winter, they keep their heavier feeding for the day hours. Their clocks and watches on the whole seem well made and regulated. Put on a live bait for pike at 5.45 A.M., 11.45 A.M., 2.45 P.M. and 5.45 P.M., and as a rule you will not be kept fooling about for long. That is upon normal days, but of course a bitter wind, cold rain, and furious frost sends every respectable herbivorous fish into strict seclusion, and thus their natural employer finds the labour market parsimoniously empty. He is grateful for any suggestion the angler can make to him for restocking his larder. But on ordinary days he feeds by the clock. Consequently a plump roach is yoked to the snap-tackle, which has hitherto not earned its living, and he goes to explore a dark continent of water, where the large rushes wade out from the bank and hold their spears in two semicircles, like a Zulu impi waiting for orders to wheel and close. Eleven fifty! eleven fifty-five! Ah, there we are. The float leaps, dabs, and pecks, leaving a small pilot to show how the roach is being taken round a ten-foot circle. This time there are no piles and he is nothing of a monster, so he comes, leaping almost into the punt, and is secured one minute after noon, a straight-bellied young male of four pounds, or perhaps

a bit under. One slips off the triangles and leaves them in him, rebaits with a new set and sends a second message into the same place before the precious dinner-time shall be over. In the meanwhile a thrifty man will extract the first set of hooks, thumping the lively fish upon the head with a knife-haft, and loosening the nearest from that sharp —— But the float has gone again, and this time with a whizz. The widow has hooked herself and is off down stream, like an escaped convict sprinting into Okehampton. She is taking the line right out and the red wheel is growing naked. Assuredly—but there is no such word in angling. If she had run another five feet she would have lived a merry widow, perhaps till her memory began to fail. As it is, she halts and hesitates. Then she turns and comes from side to side, shaking her head. It feels as though she were shaking her fist, with a torrent of fish-wife abuse. The virago, how she threads in and out across the river, coming nearer, almost in view! But off she goes again, three-quarters of her first dash, and along the same path. Then she turns and comes in a bee-line for the punt, so slowly that one gropes for the landing-net, prematurely. It was not the least what the lady meant. She has several dances yet upon her programme; but at last she heels over and comes home, fat and pink as Aurora's fingers, buxom as the landlady at the Dragon in "Martin Chuzzlewit," but as bad a scold as Mrs. Weller senior. She is just under a dozen pounds, and the barbel looks a degenerate, city-bred hooligan by her tail. Even her husband is a lank hobbledehoy beside her; but then that is the rule in pike-land. The woman rules, so she has to put up with a mere Little Englander for a mate. What imperial spirit could accept so much bulk and power and determination in a wife? If she will rule (and pike-ladies are determined and resolute on that subject) she can have but a poor weak boyish kingdom to rule over. The larger males prefer to live their own lives, as the phrase is, in sluggish scorn of their coevals, now doughty dowagers with lancet teeth and boisterous tempers. Better live unmated than with a ponderous shrew, who can spell neither sympathy nor submission. As for the slender slips of girlhood, these indignant ascetics think of them as rations rather than as sweethearts and class them among the things less amiable than edible. The heart and its affairs disappear in ripe manhood, and the maw is the only *cor cordium* which survives. In pike-land the feminist has obtained her supremacy. Madam Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence, has got it. But the result is such as Hinduism must delight to observe. Love and marriage are the

toys of youth. Years bring the philosophic mind, and the full-grown men are all celibates. They contemplate deeply, between meals, upon the vanity of their former slavery and the glories of their emancipation. This train of thought is rudely interrupted by a cheerful voice from the bank. The other rod calls, and has seven fair chub to show, but is tired, hot, and hungry.

Since all nature now takes a siesta, should not man follow her lead? The soothing effects of lager and tobacco open one's ears to the lullaby of plashing waters, and the soft-whispering rushes suggest cradle songs. The punt chops to and fro slowly in the shade. What do the wood-pigeons say in your country? "Two sticks across, and that'll do"? In mine they say: "You two, two fools! You two, two fools!" Perhaps they are right. Let them have it how they will. We nod on our sacks and the humble-bees drone a false bourdon to the melodious tenor voices of the waters.

When we rouse ourselves and rub the pins and needles out of our limbs, the shadows have grown and the insects are dancing in small private parties, just to prepare themselves for the great county balls they will shortly be forming. The lull is over. There is a sense of expectancy about the very waters. We peer up and down. The perch are stirring, but there are no minnows in the can, or a paternoster would be the very thing. Instead some well-scoured brandlings are not to be despised; but the larger fish are not interested in them, so we try roaching again, and get a few, at tedious intervals. A man comes by in a boat, rowed softly by the proper owner of the punt. He is trying for chub, and whisks his fly up and down, with no result. The oarsman remarks that there are always chub here, and the fare changes his fly, but nobody rises. Perhaps those small frogs on a paternoster might move them? We tie one each to the perch hook, a medium-sized one on a bristle, and cast out, where the boatman said there were always large chub. The leads fall with a quiet chuckle upon the quivering stream just over a shelf of pebbles, and the line is tightened. Suddenly both rods tremble at once. Two heavy chub are struck. Five pounds the brace they weigh, and are as like one another as if they were the Dioscuri themselves. One milt, one spawn, one metal, one self-mould that fashioned thee, made him a chub, as Shakespeare would say. Two more froglets leap from the punt in silken fetters; but the nature of chevens is such that they are warned by the fate of their companions, being unlike the wicked. Yet not altogether unlike them, for the effect of a solemn warning is soon washed out of their floody minds. If

environment has the mighty effect which some insist upon, we should expect some discontinuance in the minds of those who live in a flowing stream, where the whole environment is always in motion, and the river-scape changes in colour, shape, and material with every gush. Even the straight lines of light from our world, so conducive of direct thought, refract and ripple in the swirl of that nether region. These lower lights are the natural haunt of oblivion. Lethe was a stream. If old men forget, much more old chub! We reason ourselves into a slow but qualified hope, but all the time the taut lines tremble only with the regular, monotonous motion given by the impact of the water. Not a tug. Perhaps an environment which so readily lends itself to lapses of life and memory would have the opposite effect upon the mind? The giddy feather-heads would be eliminated by natural and angling selection. The powers of memory and watchfulness, braced by difficulty, hardened by repression, would arise in more stubborn strength. On the one hand to forget is easy, but it is the road of death. Forget and you will soon be forgotten, except by cooks and their kindred. That must jog the uncertain memory, with some vigour. It must make stable those very powers of the mind which a wavering *entourage* would cause to lapse and wane. An ancient people—(fishes are a very ancient people compared with the modern notion of dry land and its still more recent tramplers)—an ancient people must have social customs firmly established. They must of necessity be deeply conservative, obstinately and rootedly and instinctively conservative. They must share those rare and inevitable powers of memory, if not by spoken words, by nervous flip of fin or tail. The goggle of a chub's eye, to his cheaply beloved brethren, perhaps preaches a course of sermons on mortification, more eloquent, more persuasive, and with greater mastery than a word-compelling canon, with St. Paul's pulpit at his feet and Johnson's diction in his head, can possibly compass. As we pursue our meditation upon these lines, hope becomes thin, and as the shadows lengthen we smoke and begin to despair. But a thought strikes me. We have not allowed for the ardent Toryism of the appetites. Man is not all mind, nor is chub. To eat small frog at sight has been a rule of life among the latter people. The lust of the belly even among ourselves jostles medical science and the rules of prudence with rude contempt. If carnality makes some havoc among enlightened liverymen, what may it not do in gobber-mouthed, red-finned circles? In imagination we see clean throat-teeth grinding with Radical fury against the prohibition

and restriction of racial instinct and law. No doubt in the fading light they are looking and lusting. The thought of frog grows large. That of hook diminishes. Before we have decided definitely between the pros and cons, one line begins to pay out. A fine fish has not only taken it, but, feeling that he has broken the convention of his swim, is carrying it quietly round to the other side of the punt, where he can be dealt with and landed with no fear of panic and homily among the school. Excellent law-breaker! He pays a tribute to virtue by snatching his morsel on the sly, and means to return presently to impress upon the younger chevens the need of observing the morality which he has slighted. Here is the landing-net. He must be four pounds if he is an ounce. I will find you the spring balance. Look out, man, you've got a bite! A bolder transgressor this, or one hooked *in flagrante delicto*, for he runs up and down among his people, calling for their help and scaring them into the sternest and most rigorous abstention, as we shall presently discover. But the time has come to reel up and drive the punt home in the dusk. Two stiff and happy men are at last winking in the bright lamplight, dazzled by the glare of a white cloth and almost too tired to read the headlines of the newspaper, which belongs to another world, a world we had so entirely forgotten that its very existence gives us a start of surprise. Fancy, it is going on still, that unreal world, where folk quarrel, murder, marry, bet, vote, divorce, buy, sell, go to hot cricket matches and waste their time! What a pity they should! Good-night!

The Holy Mountain

By Stephen Reynolds

(Author of "A Poor Man's House")

XIII (*continued*)

"THE TOAST OF THE EVENING

"The Chairman in very complimentary terms gave the toast of the evening,—His Worship the Mayor. There had, he said, been many able and distinguished men who had held this exalted civic office in days gone by. Such was the ex-Mayor, the father of the present Mayor. Never in the history of the ancient borough of Trowbury, he was informed—never in England, he thought—had a son succeeded his father in the highest office a town can confer. Some men, said the Swan of Avon, Gentle Shakespeare, were born great, some achieved greatness, and some had greatness thrust upon them. In Mr. Alexander Trotman, their Mayor, all those qualifications were united. He had been born great—with the power of working miracles. He had achieved greatness—by moving the Holy Mountain and once more proving the eternal truths of religion and faith. (Applause.) And greatness—the mayoralty of his native town had been thrust upon him. (Prolonged applause.) The Government, supported by a large majority in the Parliament where he (the speaker) had the honour to be Trowbury's representative, had granted a long lease of the Holy Mountain, as it stood in Acton, to Mr. Alexander Trotman. (Applause.) Quite right. (Applause.) It was not a party question. (Applause.) The labourer was worthy of his hire. (Applause). Mr. Trotman would receive the aid and advice of his (the chairman's) friend, Sir Pushcott Bingley, than whom no greater commercial genius had ever lived—(applause)—and commerce, he would remind them, was now the primary occupation of mankind—(applause)—the golden girdle that encircled it from pole to pole. (Prolonged applause.) He understood that Mr. Alexander Trotman would devote the Holy Mountain entirely to religious purposes—(Hear, hear)—to a great

revival of unsectarian religion, to the broad fundamental basis of religion on which they could all agree. A banquet, however, was not the precise place to discuss religious matters, as the Rev. Vicar and Mr. Snooks would tell them. Therefore he would conclude an over-long speech—(No, no)—by congratulating Mr. Alexander Trotman on attaining, so early in life, the high and well-deserved position of Mayor of Trowbury—(great applause)—and he congratulated Trowbury on its distinguished young Mayor. (Tumultous applause.)

"'For he's a jolly good fellow!' was begun, taken up on all sides of the room, repeated, and sung with right vigorous good-will for several minutes. When the last 'And so say all of us!' died away the youthful Mayor, looking very pale in his heavy, blue, fur-edged robe of office, rose from his seat at the right hand of the Chairman to respond.

"THE MAYOR'S SPEECH

"Holding a small piece of white paper in a hand that trembled perceptibly, the Mayor replied: 'Mr. Chairman, Aldermen, Councillors, and gentlemen, I thank you heartily and will do my best to show myself worthy of the high honour you have conferred upon me.'

"It was universally felt how much the grave simplicity of the Mayor's speech accorded with the greatness of the occasion. From all parts of the room sympathetic eyes were turned upon the young Mayor, when the ex-Mayor rose to speak.

"THE MAYOR'S HEALTH

"The ex-Mayor (Mr. Ald. James Trotman) trusted they would excuse a longer speech from his son, the Mayor, who had, as they all knew, scarcely recovered from a long and dangerous illness. After describing in some detail his son's malady, the ex-Mayor remarked that only temperate habits and the best of mothers—his (the ex-Mayor's) best of wives and helpmeets—could have pulled the Mayor through. And the help of God also should not be forgotten. He could not but be very thankful for the Divine Watch which had been kept over him and his. He was not, as they knew, a minister, nor did he make great professions of religion, nor use religion as a cloak, but he was always ready to pay his debts, and he thanked God from the bottom of his heart. As their Member of Parliament had told them, the Holy Mountain was to be devoted exclusively to religious purposes. They should render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. Soon after the New Year there would be an

Imperial Revival, organised by the Church on behalf of all the Christians of the Empire, on the hill so miraculously removed to the outskirts of the Metropolis. His friend, Sir Pushcott Bingley, to whose generous advice he and the Mayor owed so much, had kept him informed of the progress which was being made by builders, railways, tramways, and, indeed, every resource of modern civilisation. Miracles of building were in progress, rivalling the energy of America. The eyes of the Empire were turned towards the Holy Mountain! (Applause.)

"THE MAYOR RETIRES

"At this stage the Mayor, doubtless overcome by the applause and smoke, was seen to droop. There was hardly a dry eye in the room when the ex-Mayor was seen to bend over him and to murmur, 'Better go home to bed, my boy!'—when the proud and devoted father assisted his son from the room.

"Mr. Ald. Ganthorn humorously proposed the Borough Recorder and Town Clerk and Clerk of the Peace. But for crime, he said, two of them at least would be non-existent. In that measure the town was indebted to crime. He observed that they were nuisances after the deed, and instanced them as showing what a pleasant thing a nuisance can sometimes be. Doubtless the Mayor was a nuisance when, as a baby, the ex-Mayor had to walk the room with him at night. Nobody could say he was a nuisance now. (Applause.)

"The Recorder, in responding, said that the town of Trowbury, now so celebrated on account of its Mayor, would ever hold a foremost place in his heart. He thanked them with the deepest gratitude for the warmth of the reception accorded him.

"On the return of the ex-Mayor, the Chairman gave the ex-Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Borough of Trowbury, speaking in the highest terms of his good friend, the ex-Mayor.

"THE EX-MAYOR ON MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT

"Alderman Trotman, in responding, said the day had been too much for his son, the Mayor, and almost too much for himself. He was a plain man, but had done his best for the old town. (Applause.) He had begun his year of office with the belief that in municipal affairs, as in business, honesty and integrity and work—hard work—was the best policy. And so it had turned out. He thanked them. It was a proud day for him. (Applause.) It was the day of his life. He felt he had not come into the world for nothing. He thought they might all

take away one lesson, which his mother had instilled into him at her knee, and that was, that honesty pays best in the long run. (Applause.) In the absence of the Mayor, he begged to propose the health of the best of Parliamentary representatives, their Chairman, the Right Hon. Delaine Jenkyns, M.P.

"When the cheering evoked by this toast had died down, the Chairman suitably responded. To further the interests of the town of Trowbury would always, he declared, remain the one bright ambition of his life. (Renewed cheers.)

"This concluded the toast list. Though several of the guests, including the Chairman who had to catch a train, now retired, the proceedings were prolonged to a later hour under the presidency of the ex-Mayor.

"An exceptionally good musical programme had been provided. The Town Band played outside the banqueting-room during dinner, and between and after the toasts Mr. Charles Barnes and Mr. Munchanson, L.R.C.M., rendered such old favourites as *The Death of Nelson*, *Good Old Mary Ann*, *Tom Bowling*, *Marble Halls*, *Simon the Cellarer*, *Gates of the West*, *Excelsior*, *Glorious Beer*, *The New Jerusalem*, and *From Liverpool across the Atlantic*, concluding with *Rule Britannia* and *God Save the King*. Both were in excellent voice and used them to good effect. Seldom has Trowbury heard better postprandial song. It was universally agreed that this year's Mayoral Banquet was a brilliant function, worthy of the best traditions of the town and of the importance of the occasion."

The most characteristic, the most Trowburian, part of the feast did not find its way into print in the *Trowbury Guardian*. After the chairman had left, the lights of the room became dim with smoke, so that it seemed as if the tobacco was burning itself up a second time in the gas flames. Complaints, ever becoming louder, were heard against the price and quality of the caterer's whisky, and many of the guests both amused and revenged themselves by throwing empty bottles at one another's legs underneath the table. Roars of laughter shook the Town Hall, attracting the attention of people outside. Merriment and horse-play were in command. The waiters, refusing to wait, retired to the cloak-room with a dozen bottles of champagne, and soon could not have waited even had they been willing. In order to prevent the destruction of all the glass and crockery (hired for the evening), the caterer was obliged to turn off the gas at the main, and to hide himself at the foot of the Assembly Room stairs, behind a bust of the Prince Consort.

The Mayor, meanwhile, was in bed, receiving spoon-food from his mother.

XIV

Amid the controversies and festivities of mayor-making, Trowbury had begun to take the Holy Mountain for granted—to talk about it rather than think about it. The accounts in the *Halfpenny Press* sufficed the town's curiosity as to the progress of it, if they did not suffice the persons locally concerned, and the Holy Mountain was promoted to the position of a sure thing.

But the day after the mayoral banquet Mr. Trotman, urged thereto by biliousness and a growing distrust of his friend, Sir Pushcott Bingley, began to turn over in his own mind the little he really knew about the affair, and to determine what steps he should take to get all his five fingers into the pie. He felt that the Director of the *Halfpenny Press* was neglecting him somewhat, and he doubted—yes, he did doubt—if Sir Pushcott's brief dictated letters to Castle Street had contained the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Mrs. Trotman was even more doubtful than her husband. Alec, she said, meaning his parents, had been consulted in nothing. Nothing! Alec had not even received any money except the sum in advance which Mr. Trotman had placed to his own account in the bank—for safety's sake.

What had been happening was this: as soon as it became known that Alexander Trotman would receive a lease of the Holy Mountain, on condition that it was used for religious purposes, a Provisional Committee, with the Archbishop of All the Empire at the head of it, was formed under the auspices of the *Halfpenny Press*. The Provisional Committee was informed, through Sir Pushcott Bingley, that it could enter into possession at Michaelmas. In order to safeguard itself, in case sufficient support was not forthcoming, the Provisional Committee entered into a preliminary six months' tenancy, at a high rental, but terminable by either side at the close of that period. What they did not foresee was that, in law, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. They assumed that the Holy Mountain was bound by Act of Parliament to be used for *their* religious purposes. Mr. Trotman certainly thought that in the matter of tenancy they had taken a rise out of Sir Pushcott Bingley. And so, in the back of their minds, did they.

An immediate appeal, backed by great names, was issued for money with which to build upon the Holy Mountain a grand Imperial Temple. The contract was given to a syndicate which

undertook to build in six months the Temple complete—a syndicate, as it turned out, financed by Americans.

At Michaelmas, then, the Provisional Committee, then entering into possession, reconstituted itself into a Permanent Committee, made up just the same as before, except that a few titled and politically prominent men were co-opted, in order to give it tone and influence. At noon precisely, on Michaelmas Day, the American contractors began bundling their machinery to the top of the Holy Mountain. Building started forthwith. No time to waste in laying ceremonial foundation stones! Religion was become businesslike, practical.

So far, the arrangements had worked fairly smoothly. Controversy had become difficult since the amalgamation of all the important daily newspapers into three groups—the *Halfpenny Press*, the *Penny Press*, and the *Times*. Each group, moreover, required time in which to consider what would be its most profitable policy.

When, however, the sects found that something definite was really afoot—that building had positively commenced—they were all seized with a great fear of being left out in the cold, and with an active determination to see that their rights were respected. In default of proper outlets for controversy, a huge network of intrigues grew up. London buzzed with clerics of all denominations; talking, writing, preaching, interviewing, and holding meetings of hastily formed mutual-admiration societies. The Permanent Committee spent half its day in listening to deputations, each of which was told that its contention would be most carefully considered. So careful was the consideration that it never came to a conclusion, and nothing at all happened; and the sects, like the heathen of old, raged furiously together. Building on the Holy Mountain proceeded with feverish energy. The sects looked upon the white stucco temple, raising itself, like a huge growing animal, from a chaos of black, hooting machinery, and they could not contain themselves for rage, jealousy, and curiosity. Yet it seemed as if the whole Press, except the religious journals, was conspiring to muzzle the multitude, for it declined, quite silently—"in the public interest"—to publish any more correspondence, and though thousands of letters must have been written, not one on the subject was published in columns devoted to *The Editor's Post-bag*.

Then a prominent nonconformist divine began pamphleteering. His action was hailed as a discovery; himself as a saviour. London flittered and fluttered with pamphlets. The newspaper

groups were at last compelled to decide definitely on their policies. The *Penny Press*, with its large circulation among old maids, public-houses, and retired tradesmen, was obliged to support the Church. Since the Holy Mountain, though leased temporarily, was national property, it was only right, said the *Penny Press*, that its chief benefits should accrue to the National Church. Other denominations would, of course, be allowed a share; on sufferance be it understood; for the Church of England had never shown herself intolerant. But they would naturally have to conform to Church usage and ceremonial—a line they would doubtless be quite willing to take when they found there was something to be gained by it.

The *Times*, sitting on the fence of unquestionable superiority, talked of the religious revival as one of the most interesting phenomena of modern times. The *Halfpenny Press* performed still more marvellous feats of standing on the fence, and, so to speak, dancing a jig there. It declared for unsectarianism, or rather for multi-sectarianism, being of the opinion that every form of religion should receive English justice. When the Pope applied, through the German Government, for a Catholic side-chapel in the Imperial Temple, the *Halfpenny Press* declared that such a reasonable demand from such an exalted quarter, presented through such an Imperial nation, should at once be granted. When the Mormons, following suit, asked through the American Ambassador, for seats in the Imperial Temple, the *Halfpenny Press* considered that the Mormons should be given an opportunity of entering into the confraternity of Christians, provided they pledged themselves neither to preach polygamy nor to outrage the morals of the women of England, and provided the American Ambassador became surety for their good behaviour in these respects. Thus the *Halfpenny Press* very wisely left the Permanent Committee to take the brunt of all the offence that was bound to be given, all the intolerance that had to be exercised. And when, furthermore, the Permanent Committee, declined to treat with the Buddhists, Sir Pushcott's journal regretted the refusal as decidedly ungraceful; for Buddhism approached very near to Christianity, and was besides the national religion of our gallant allies, the Japanese.

In fine, the *Halfpenny Press* posed successfully as the only tolerant, charitable, sensible, reasonable, practical, diplomatic, scientific, perspicacious, English, British, imperial, national, religious, logical, and Christian spokesman in the matter. It was the lid of a seething pot that bubbled and boiled, and did

no more. Every day it published a panoramic photograph of the Temple works. Across two paper pages, its readers saw the steel girders rise, saw the workmen clustering upon the framework, the concrete slabs fixed to the steel, and the plaster mouldings, imported from abroad, placed in position outside. By fixing the successive pictures in a special apparatus, sold on the instalment system, a cinematographic view of the building of the Imperial Temple could be seen—the Imperial Temple built in two minutes!

The Permanent Committee traversed the woods of perplexity. They decided that the Temple could not properly be consecrated, since so many sects were to worship in it. They became hopelessly involved in questions of precedence; to settle which an attempt was made to determine the date of founding of each sect. They repeatedly altered the arrangements for the opening ceremonial. A flippant journalist dubbed the Holy Mountain and its Temple *The Religious Exhibition*, and that is indeed what each compromise tended more and more to make it. The lightly uttered nickname stuck. Heads began to shake. "I told you so!" was getting ready to leap from thousands of tongues.

XV

By the beginning of March, the half-finished Imperial Temple had arisen gaunt and naked over London. It was, statisticians said, one and a half times as large as St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey put together, and, thanks to the triumphs of modern architectural engineering, it was costing less by a half to build than either of the older churches it dwarfed. Owing to the shape of the Holy Mountain, it was constructed in the form of an octagon, with two of its opposite sides, the northern and the southern, much elongated. Above it was a large dome, still, on March 1, unfinished—a skeleton dome of rusty red steel girders. On March 5 a great golden cross was placed in position on the top of the dome, but, following urgent representations from some of the Nonconformist sects, and for the sake of peace, the Permanent Committee had the golden cross removed on March 9, to be replaced by an angel with wings. For similar reasons, the Committee felt it advisable to refuse the offer of a body of Royal Academicians and wealthy High Churchmen, who wished, at their own expense, to decorate the interior with frescoes of the authentic miracles recorded in the three synoptic Gospels.

The unfortunate Committee would have been glad enough

to say to the protesting denominations, "If you don't like it, stay away." But tickets were already issued; to each sect a large block of seats; and empty floor-space in the Temple could on no account be risked. Revivalism, the Committee knew, flourishes best in a crowded building and a mephitic atmosphere.

The Grand United Opening Ceremony was fixed for March 25, the festival of the Annunciation.

Shortly before that date, the Trotmans finally decided to stay at home. A gentleman most patriarchial in appearance and businesslike in speech—the yellow hairs of his long white beard corresponded in tint with the gold rims of his large spectacles, and his tongue went nineteen to the dozen—introduced himself at Castle Street as Archdeacon of the sect called Watchers, who, he said, watched and prayed for the Second Advent and possessed a divine apprehension of its coming. He offered to prove that Alec was indeed the Messiah, and when Mr. Trotman inquired what benefit that might be to his son, the Mayor of Trowbury, the Archdeacon of the Watchers took refuge in prophecy. He declared that by his prophetic faculty he also knew Alec to be in love. (Which Mrs. Trotman, on her part, felt was true enough.) And he added that the Messiahship would be made manifest, and the Millennium proclaimed, at the Grand United Opening of the Imperial Temple on the Holy Mountain. Neither Alec nor his father believed in the prophetic patriarch; but yet nevertheless, notwithstanding. . . . Wonderful things *had* happened. The old man spoke like a prophet, semi-articulately and wildly and with conviction, and he had a prophetic presence. They showed him out very politely (Mr. Trotman mentioned that he was a magistrate), and, discretion being the better part of piety, they decided that it would be better for Alec's health if, on the great day, he stayed at home.

On March 25, which was sunny and spring-like, so that voices in the streets seemed to sound clearer and plainer, half London rattled out to Acton, where the Imperial Temple stood—new, rain-washed and white—upon the summit of the Holy Mountain. The extension of the tube railway was unfinished, but that only made the better business for cabs, trams, and motor-'buses. Editions of the *Halfpenny Press* sold themselves by bundles along the route from the City. From the *Halfpenny Press*, the assembling multitude learned that it was indeed assembling, and in countless numbers. It was as if you should purchase a newspaper to be informed that you were purchasing it, and such pleasing, such inimitable enterprise was much praised.

Admission to the interior of the Imperial Temple was to be

gained by ticket only. Every one, however, who wished, might go upon the slopes of the Holy Mountain by payment of one shilling towards the Building Debt and the Maintenance Fund. They would at least be able to see the Archbishop of All the Empire when he mounted to the dome of the Temple, after the Grand United Opening Ceremony, to bestow his episcopal benediction upon the multitude, upon London, upon England, upon the Empire.

It was noticed that the sunshine, following a night-frost and early morning's rainfall, had already caused some of the symbolic plaster to peel off the cornice of the Temple.

All the morning the turnstiles at the foot of the Holy Mountain creaked and clanked. All the morning were heard the cries of hawkers, offering for sale the only authentic programmes, the only authentic hymns, the only authentic prayers ; picture-postcards of the Temple within and without, around and about, of the Holy Mountain, and of Alexander Trotman—Alexander Trotman's last photo, Alexander Trotman as a baby, Alexander Trotman in 'is mayor's robes, Alexander Trotman an' 'is gal (a faked photograph in which the place of Julia was taken by a fourth-rate actress), and Alexander Trotman a-fiyntin' orf the 'Oly Mounting. Acton post-office was besieged, and only a strong draft of police prevented its being wrecked when the stock of halfpenny stamps ran out.

About eleven o'clock the various bodies of ticket-holding sects, with their banners, marched up the slope of the Holy Mountain and in at the side-doors of the Temple. Since most of the sectarians were in pietistic black coats and very various top-hats, some astonishment was caused by the arrival of a large contingent wearing everyday clothes and red ties. A rumour spread that it was the Mormons. Many of the Nonconformists who had derived great pleasure from the refusal of the Catholics to be present at the Grand United Opening Ceremony were not a little disgusted, and expressed themselves not a little bitterly and loudly, when, on looking into the side-chapel assigned to the Catholics, they saw there a large array of polychrome saints and Holy Families, placed on sale by a firm of monumental sculptors named Isaac Cohen & Co.

Just before noon, when the high interior of the Temple seemed to buzz with voices, it was rumoured that, owing to a cold, the King was unable (or unwilling) to be present; had never intended to be present, in fact.

At noon punctually the Archbishop of All the Empire arrived in his motor-car at the foot of the Holy Mountain, and went into

a galvanised-iron vestry, or robing shed. Then, vested in a brilliant cope and mitre, preceded by his chaplain with the pastoral staff, and followed by his clergy, he ascended the slope. He stopped from time to time, it was observed, as if to take breath. Behind the heads of the Church walked the leading ministers of all the denominations represented within the Temple. When the Archbishop came to a halt on the slope, they had all to halt too; which they did badly, and very undignified they looked.

Meanwhile, the congregation within had with the greatest difficulty been induced to sing all the same hymn. While the Archbishop and clergy and ministers were marching up the wide central aisle, it seemed even as if everything were going lustily and well; as if the service would be really congregational, the religious devotion of a nation. But when the Archbishop intoned a strictly reverent prayer, it became evident to the worldlier of those present that this sort of thing would never do for sightseers and people accustomed to the luxuriant eloquence of revivalism. The congregation began chattering, like inattentive schoolboys. The men in red ties, having declined to kneel, now stood bolt upright, awaiting a sign from their leaders. They were, in fact, enthusiasts of the Secularist, Socialist, and Labour parties, and had received their tickets treacherously from two jealous denominations which had applied for tickets in disproportion to their size, and, not getting so many, had changed their minds about being present. The red-tied men laughed and talked with a disdainful loudness among themselves, and on the stewards remonstrating with them, they broke into a defiant shout of "Down with the priests! Down with capitalism! Down with the Church! An end to mockery!"

"Down with it!
Down with it!
E-ven to the grou-ound!"

This last they sang with magnificent solidity to the plain Gregorian chant.

Shouts arose from all parts of the great building; a tremendous snarl. Isolated fights began. The congregation swayed to and fro, the temporary pews with them. There was a panic. All who were able to do so made a rush for the doors. The Archbishop and his suite retired through a small door at the East End of the Temple, and, with a strong escort of police, they made their way back from the Holy Mountain to the City.

The congregation in its thousands pressed from all the doors of the building like outraged bees from an apiary. Quicker

almost than by word of mouth the news spread down the slopes that the Grand United Opening Ceremony had been a failure; that the Archbishop was gone again; that the multitude was cheated of its benediction and its spectacle. Soon the noise resembled the clamour of birds preparing for migration. The crowd from the Temple pressed downwards; the crowd from below pressed up: the slope was, as it were, a monstrous carpet, spotted white with faces—dragged backwards and forwards, blown up by the wind, rucked and undulated. Turves were pulled up and thrown at the Temple, flints as well. By the time the mounted police came up in force the windows of the Temple were all smashed, the floor of it littered with earth, and its new white plaster walls splashed with blobs of dirt.

Not till half-past three in the afternoon was the Holy Mountain totally clear of people and in undisputed possession of the police.

The headlines of the *Evening Press*, the newspaper placards, and the raucous newsboys announced one and the same thing:

"THE GRAND FIASCO!"

Some called it "The Grand United Fiasco."

In Acton and along the Uxbridge Road all except the eating and drinking shops put up their shutters. Men went about nosing like rats, and asking breathlessly: "Is it true—they've read the Riot Act?"

XVI

Sir Pushcott Bingley, like the King, did not personally attend the Grand United Opening Ceremony of the Imperial Temple. He remained at the real head of affairs, in that Palace of Telephones, the *Halfpenny Press* Buildings. With him was John Fulton, the Halfpenny Pressman that Trowbury knew, now promoted to the position of Holy Mountain secretary, in place of a more talented young man about whom pressmen whispered in Fleet Street, "Bled out!"

Sir Pushcott was anxious, not about ultimate success, for that he scarcely doubted, but about the precise means by which he and circumstances were to achieve it. Whilst the Halfpenny Pressman, hearing only the tittering echo of the telephonic voices from the Holy Mountain, watched his chief receiving news from minute to minute, watched the varying expressions on his chief's face, yet remained in ignorance of the great events which were known in the very same room, he became very nervous and strung up. He felt ready to burst, to cry. He realised that there is an obverse side to promotion. When Sir

Pushcott put down the receiver, saying : " Good ! I hoped so ! " poor John Fulton nearly jumped out of his chair, and shouted, " Yes, sir ! " at the top of his voice, as if his chief had been at the far end of the wires, among the stirring events.

Sir Pushcott meditated a few moments, then began swiftly and surely to dictate to his subordinates. That day's *Evening Press* was to startle the nation ; next morning's *Halfpenny Press* was to strike vigorously the note of Sir Pushcott's policy. He was well satisfied. He left his office repeating to himself, as he always did, a selection of proverbs which praised himself retrospectively. " Look before you leap," was one of them. " Everything comes to him who knows how to wait," was another.

XVII

Between seven and eight o'clock that same evening, Mr. Trotman heard a newspaper boy running down Castle Street. " *Evening Press !* Spechul edition ! The grand Fyasco ! To-day's ceremony on the 'Oly Mountain ! *Evening Press !* Grand United Fyasco ! "

The bell of the Famous Grocery tinkled, the knocker banged. " Spechul edition. Yer y'are, sir. Take two ? "

Mr. Trotman with two copies returned to his arm-chair. He read. He read again. He looked at the other copy as if it might be different. Alec and his mother came into the room. Something was very wrong.

" Look at this, Alec ! If we'd been there like I wanted to. . . . What's the good of your being Mayor now ? Simply extra expense for nothing."

Mr. Trotman worked himself into a temper with his son. Mrs. Trotman drew Alec to her, and defended him from the father, who for some time continued to express himself scenically. At last, the ex-Mayor threw himself back in his arm-chair with a fervent " Good Lord ! " and read the *Evening Press* a third time.

" Why doesn't Sir Pushcott wire or send ? " he asked rhetorically. " It's his duty, nothing more or less. It's the bishops have done it. Those confounded black crows got no idea of business ! There's a debt on the Parish Room now. First they spend the money, and then they ask for the money, because they've spent it. The Church wants business men in it. Why doesn't Sir Pushcott look after the thing himself, or else let me look after it ? It's *his* fault ! "

Mrs. Trotman tried to oil the troubled waters. " I think Sir Pushcott has treated us very badly," she said.

Alec spoke finally. "Sir Pushcott's all right," he said. "*He* knows what he's about."

"Rot!" his father exploded.

Mr. Trotman settled himself down to a good bout of self-pity. Those many acquaintances who thought they'd just look in at the Famous Grocery to sympathise and to learn the latest authentic news, all those he showed to the door with suppressed insult. Alec, caring little for the Holy Mountain except as a means to an end, yearned with a most peculiar intensity for his motherly Julia, and could nowise be comforted by his mother's ministrations.

Unhappy the house of Trotman that night!

With next morning's *Halfpenny Press*, however, their spirits revived a little. The causes of the Grand United Fiasco were numbered and set in a column.

1. Bad organisation.
2. Railway unreadiness.
3. Absence of H.M. the King.
4. Absence of Mr. Alexander Trotman.
5. Presence of the Secularists.
6. Perpetual demand for money.
7. Traffic disorganisation.
8. Motor-'bus disasters.
9. Unattractiveness of the ceremony.
10. Ignorance of how to manage crowds.
11. Cowardice of the promoters.
12. Lack of the true Revival Spirit.
13. Religious intolerance.

Thus did the *Halfpenny Press* place the burden of the blame on convenient shoulders. The Permanent Committee (short biographies of its members on another page) were compared unfavourably with the Welsh and American revivalists. In accepting the Holy Mountain from Mr. Alexander Trotman they had incurred a vast, an imperial, responsibility. On that account they had collected large sums of money. Where was it now? They had come to total failure. The Holy Mountain with its Imperial Temple had been contemptuously called the Religious Exhibition. As an exhibition, even, it had failed. Something was wrong somewhere—grave inefficiency. Since the religious bodies had shown themselves too disunited, too lacking in the essential Spirit of Christianity, let the Holy Mountain be devoted to the cause of humanity. Let religious mockery cease. Let the sects go each to its little church or

chapel. They had had their divinely appointed opportunity; they had had this miracle; and they had been found wanting. It was now the turn of the people, whom the un-Christian denominations had presumed to teach.

Mr. Trotman was sure he smelt a rat. He even expressed the opinion—in the privacy of the Famous Grocery—that Sir Pushcott was up to one of his tricks. And when, a day or two later, he read that Mr. Alexander Trotman, according to the terms of the sub-tenancy, would call on the Permanent Committee to quit the Holy Mountain at the end of April, he was less surprised at the news than at Sir Pushcott's high-handedness in giving the Permanent Committee notice to quit in the name of Mr. Alexander Trotman, without reference to the said Mr. Alexander Trotman—that is, to his father.

On a business memorandum form he wrote thus:

"THE FAMOUS GROCERY ESTABLISHMENT.
"TROWBURY, WILTS.

"*April* 1.

"DEAR SIR PUSHCOTT,

"It has been brought to my notice that you have given the Permanent Committee notice to quit the Holy Mountain in the name of my son, the Mayor of Trowbury. It appears to me that that was the businesslike thing to do, but I beg to take exception to your doing it without consulting my son or myself. Such a procedure appears high-handed and unbusinesslike to

"Your obedient servant,
"JAMES TROTMAN."

By return of post Mr. Trotman received the reply following:

"'HALFPENNY PRESS' BUILDINGS,
"(DIRECTION DEPT.),
"LONDON, E.C.,

"*April* 2.

"DEAR SIR,

"Sir Pushcott Bingley desires me to beg you—

"(1) To refer to your copy of the Agreement between your son and Sir Pushcott Bingley, duly and freely signed by your son, in your presence.

"(2) To address all inquiries thereon to Sir Pushcott Bingley's solicitors, Messrs. Brown, Smith, Pyne, and Williams, of Chancery Lane.

"(3) To kindly bear in mind that business is business, and time money.

"Sir Pushcott Bingley will be glad if Mr. Alexander Trotman will sign and return immediately by registered post the enclosed document.

"Yours very faithfully,
"For Sir Pushcott Bingley,
"JOHN FULTON,
"(*Secy.*)."

The document enclosed was the formal notice to quit. Nothing could be done except sign it, but whether the consternation of the Trotmans, on receiving the above letter, was greater or less than the consternation of the sectarians, cannot be accurately gauged. In the latter quantity was predominant, in the former quality. Common to both was a defiance that knew not how to express itself.

BOOK IV

I

"RETURN again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London Town!"

That story, by whomsoever carelessly made, is as lasting a fact as London itself. It is our national pantomime, the tinsel wherewith we decorate our death-trap. Like Whittington and his cat (Miss Starkey had many feline points) did Julia and her friend follow Bow Bells up the wind. Precisely what end they had in their minds, who knows? At least, they were proof against the menace of the paper-patched tenement houses on the way in towards Paddington Station. They had day-dreams of bettering themselves. With the remainder of her savings in her reticule—a few sovereigns and one bank-note—Julia was bent on finding employment in her old shop at Acton. Miss Starkey's idea was less definite. Perhaps a barmaid's place. Perhaps. . . . Well, the least said, soonest mended. At all events, she was fiercely, desperately determined to have a good time. "Is that London?" she asked when they passed through Reading, Slough, Southall, Ealing. Expresses whizzing by westwards made her laugh aloud. Julia behaved in what she believed to be a proper public manner. It was merciful that these two young women were too homeless, too irrational to ask each other, "And after that—what then?"

A porter addressed Miss Starkey (not Julia) as "My dear!"—

so subtle are the speechless communications of mankind. Julia, angered almost beyond bearing and feeling more than ever the uncertainty of her foothold in the world, decided to go straight out from Paddington to Acton by train. She feared to face London. At Acton Station they left their luggage—mainly contained in bulging basket-work—at the cloak-room, tidied themselves in the ladies' waiting-room, and set out on foot for the Uxbridge Road. The whirl and rush of the city seemed to grip Julia less when she was afoot.

"All London isn't like this," remarked Miss Starkey with conviction.

"No, dear," said Julia. Nothing more.

But a surprise awaited them. Into all her mental pictures of Acton Julia had forgotten to insert the Holy Mountain.

There it was, however. She saw it; she could not help seeing it; saw the chalky scars in its side, old quarries where Wiltshire yokels had worked; and thought she detected the path by which she and Alec had climbed up from Mrs. Parfitt's, though that path had long since been obliterated. It was uncanny. She shivered. It was like meeting an old friend to find him dead, or insane. She thought with intensity of Alec. She seemed to smell the smell of the Down air as it had been on *that* evening. She ran her eyes from the paling and galvanised pay-huts at the bottom to the battered Imperial Temple at the top. Its smashed windows were like eye-sockets lacking eyes.

But it was the size of it that impressed Miss Starkey. "My word, what a sky-scraper the Temple is!" she exclaimed.

"D'you think so?" said Julia. She had rather it had remained the site of her love's fading dream, as the song calls it. When a man dies, we say, "Poor So-and-so!" and that's an end of it if we are sincere. Poor Julia would have wished the same. Her earth had dropped beneath her; her heavens had drawn away from her; and she was left like a marionette, swinging in mid-air.

She found her old employer groaning with an attack of lumbago; no longer the sleek *Kindly step this way, madam;* but a grovelling, jerking piece of wreckage, bemoaning in a dim back room the loss of trade which had resulted from one of those ceaseless shiftings of the classes and masses which happen so suddenly in the suburbs of a great city. He was genuinely sorry he could not give her a berth, for Julia was one of those people whom one likes to meet again. He was, he said, not employing her sort of young lady nowadays. He was trying to retrieve his business by an alteration in its character from selectness to cheapness, from good customers to the many, and so far, though

the good customers had gone, the many had not come. Propped on two chairs, beside a pile of bills and letters that had pictures of fashions upon them, he told Julia pitifully that he had been compelled to begin ticketing the goods in his window. The Holy Mountain had driven all the smart people away from Acton. From a residential suburb, it had become a sort of excursion pleasure garden—a perfect bear-garden. He was sorry; he would have asked her to dinner with himself and his wife, had he not become a vegetarian in the hope of curing his lumbago. Cheaper, too! It took him just there, in the small of the back. . . . "Ough, ah! ah!—Good morning, Miss Jepp. If you should want another testimonial. . . . Very pleased to. Good. . . . Ough! ah! ah!"

Julia took the bad news to Miss Starkey, who had been waiting at a tea-shop. "He says the Holy Mountain's been and spoilt his trade."

"It wouldn't have spoilt *my* trade, if I'd been him," said Miss Starkey.

Nor would it, probably. Lack of ability, lack of push, was not one of her failings. She had dropped off her baby, when it became an inconvenience, like a cicatrice from a healed-up wound. "We must go into lodgings," she said now, without the least hesitation.

"Yes, I s'pose we must," said Julia. She had hoped by working at the draper's to keep herself, and her friend as well if necessary; possibly to get Miss Starkey into the draper's cash bureau.

At the end of a tiring day on foot and in tramcars, they found a half-furnished room in a street off Shepherd's Bush, in a meanly respectable street frequented by pedestrians as a short cut, but hardly ever entered by a vehicle other than a hawker's.

They fetched their luggage, and at the nearest shop bought crockery enough to rub along with. Their boxes and baskets partially unpacked, they spent the evening over tea and bread and butter and biscuits before a ninepenny fire in a rusty grate. Vermin made them feel more homeless and helpless than ever. For some time almost their only amusement was the couple in a room opposite theirs on the other side of the street. All day long, the woman, a stout solemn creature in black, sat sewing at her window, occasionally craning her neck the better to observe some one in the street. But in the evening her man returned from work. He would chuck her under the chin and hit her playfully on the breasts, and sometimes he would catch hold of her nose and drag her round the room. Yet apart they were the staidest of people. Julia caught herself envying that woman. It was

with more than laughter that she looked at the weighty middle-aged couple advancing, retreating, pirouetting about their one small room; watched their ample shadows on the blind. She greatly wondered in what words they spoke to one another; and though Miss Starkey called it the Punch and Judy Show, Julia felt miserably the fact that the middle-aged couple had a home and each other. She watched them greedily, wishing the while that she was back in the Emporium, among the assistants and faces she knew—wishing it, oh how much!

She sought work half-heartedly, and ended by taking in sewing from her old employer at Acton, without realising that she was among the sweated—blouses of her own design to be made for ninepence each and then ticketed in the Acton window as *Direct from Paris*, 8*s.* 11¾*d.*, *cheap*. A subtle form of sweating it was, in that it was sauced with pride of design, for Julia was something of an artist at her trade. Secure of bread and butter and tea, she sat at her window sewing, and welcomed Miss Starkey with a smile and food when that more energetic young woman returned daily from her explorations in London.

Quite soon, Miss Starkey began adding money to the household purse. She had found, so she said, a "sit." in a West-End bar during the rush time. That is to say, a very nice gentleman had found it for her. Julia, being glad, designed and made her a couple of charming blouses.

Then Miss Starkey began staying away at night. The way was far, she explained; she left work late, and the other young lady allowed her to share a bedroom. She had hopes, indeed, of being taken on as a full-timer.

The two girls took a newspaper, of course—the *Halfpenny Press*, and sometimes even the *Penny Press* too. But journalism, since its attainment of so high a pitch of decorativeness, had lost much of its reality; in apeing realism it had ceased to be real; for we can no more digest a surfeit of news than a surfeit of food, and we easily become lookers-on at the events of the world instead of participators in them. Julia and Miss Starkey read the newspapers to each other, sitting primly because they could not sit otherwise on their two wooden chairs, and because Miss Starkey, when she laid herself on the bed, always went to sleep. They knew the news was more or less true, yet did not feel its truth. The world was a halfpenny peep-show to them. Even the columns dealing with the agitation which circled around and about Alexander Trotman and His Holy Mountain, seemed to them merely so much fiction—a pleasant fiction and an exciting, but a shadow-show, admission one halfpenny. Julia

never fully succeeded in identifying the Alexander Trotman and the Holy Mountain of the Press with the Alec and the Ramshorn Hill that she knew so well.

She did not realise, for instance, what had really happened, and what was likely to happen, when she read that the Holy Mountain had been leased by Mr. Trotman to the Pro Bono Publico Co., Ltd., and that it would by them be opened in three months as a People's Pleasure Ground, which—having regard to its natural advantages, the improvements which would be carried out, and the attractive enterprise of the Pro Bono Publico Co., Ltd.—must rival every pleasure centre in the world. She was surprised that the Holy Mountain and the Imperial Temple should be let as a pleasure ground after usage for religious purposes, and she wondered if the Temple would be taken down—merely that.

She was therefore shocked when one afternoon Miss Starkey returned to their lodging, flushed, dishevelled, and brimming over with news:

"I say, Julie, you did ought to have been in town this morning. There's such a row on over Alec Trotman's Mountain. No end of a hullaballo! The whole of Oxford Street was held up for a quarter of a mile before I got to the Circus—simply a pack of 'buses, and cabs, and motors, and carts, like sardines in a box. I heard people saying they'd never seen anything like it. I wonder the bobbies didn't move them on. When I got to the Circus after such a push and scramble, there was a set of white-haired old parsons going down Regent Street with a band playing hymn tunes—*Onward, Christian Soldiers*, I think' twas—and behind them there was a whole long procession of men in black coats and white ties and all sorts of clergymen walking beside them. Their singing sounded like cats in the next street. They all looked as solemn as if they were going to a funeral. And they carried a lot of banners with paintings on them, worked on silk, and a lot of placards on sticks—you never saw such a thing. Nobody could cross the street except when a real swell came along, and then the bobbies stopped the procession a minute, and on it went again like black water running down a gutter. They had big posters, Julie, with simply awful likenesses of Alec Trotman on them, and *Down with the traitors to God*, and *God and His Holy Mountain*, or *Hill of Sion*—I forget which—and *What would Jesus have done?* and *To give a Thing and take a Thing makes it the Devil's Plaything*, and *How long, O Lord, how long?* I can't tell you all of them. You never saw such a sight. Now and then they started cheering. The cheer came up Regent Street, swelled big in the Circus, and fizzled out up Langham

Place. The policemen and every one looked at them as if they were children playing at processions—*you* know. And they kept on coming to the Circus as if there wasn't never going to be any end to them. They all looked as soapy as a parson when some one says 'Damn.' I felt as if I should like to stick pins into the seats of their trousers to make 'em jump. They had ever so many likenesses of Alec—none of 'em flattering, I must say. I stood and watched them for, I should think, three-quarters of an hour, and then I asked a policeman nicely to slip me across, and he did, and there was just the same crush the other side of the Circus—half London held up for a blooming procession of parsons. . . . Hark! That's the postman, isn't it?"

Post was Julia's one excitement in London, apart from the chronic, painful excitement of being there at all. As she had told Alec on Ramshorn Hill, she was not strong enough to live in a murky city. London soon destroyed her freshness; made her plumpness look like fat. But now, taking the letter from Miss Starkey's hand, she looked quite young and pretty for the moment. "It's Mrs. Clinch's writing!" she exclaimed.

The letter contained a roundabout statement to the effect that Mrs. Clinch had found no one to fill Julia's place in the Emporium; that one dressmaker had been useless and another had run away in debt; that customers were grumbling and Mr. Clinch was grumbling too; that they had lost the custom of a county family; that Julia had always known how to suit Trowbury taste; that Mrs. Clinch would be so thankful if she would forgive and forget and return; and finally that Mr. Clinch would be glad to agree to a slight increase in salary. Julia knew what life at the Emporium was like. She pitied the well-meaning, ineffectual Mrs. Clinch, whom she had many times protected from the redoubtable draper, and comforted after an upset. The protective, motherly spirit that was so strong in her, the feeling of loneliness that, as it were, soaked her through, had brought her to a conclusion some time before she asked Miss Starkey: "What *shall* I do now, Edie?"

"Why, you're set up again, Julie. More pay, too. And Trowbury air always did suit you."

"But you, Edie?"

"Oh, I'm all right. I shall stay here, dear. *I* can take care of myself."

"The baby. . . ."

"Bother the baby!"

"Edie!"

"Poor little thing! I'm no mother to it, am I, Julie?

You'll go over and look at it sometimes, won't you, Julie ? " Miss Starkey spoke almost wistfully.

" Nobody else but you can be its mother to the child," said Julia. She almost wished it had been her own.

" Well, *I* can't—that's a sure thing. I know you'll keep an eye on it, dear ; and old Nurse Parfitt. . . . I'll send her down some cash."

" It's not that. . . ."

" Anyhow, I'm *not* coming. I can't. How *can* I now ? Why, I'm turned out of Trowbury—twenty-four hours to clear out in ! "

Julia was surprised by an outburst of weeping. " How *can* I ? Oh, how *can* I ? " Miss Starkey kept on asking. Then, with a rapidity astounding to a more coherent nature, like Julia's, she got up, dried her eyes, washed her face, passed Julia's comb through her hair, scented a clean handkerchief, and said with decision : " You go, dear, and I stay, and that's the end of that."

Julia said, " Very well, dear."

Three days and she was back again at Trowbury, with Mrs. Clinch dropping tears upon the shoulder-strap of a new blouse bought in Oxford Street for the occasion.

That was the only time Julia went into the city.

II

When the *Halfpenny Press*, containing news of the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate, had arrived in Trowbury, slight differences in expression again masked a remarkable unanimity in opinion. " Well, I'm damn'd ! " observed the men who had some pretences to education ; whilst those who had not said, with a more philosophical tranquillity, " Well, I be damn'd." The ladies and women meant exactly the same when they exclaimed on all sides, " Good gracious !—What a shame !—Well, I never !—Dear me !—Deary me !—Who'd ha' thought it ! "

Mr. Trotman looked into the paper, told Mrs. Trotman to show it to the Mayor when he came in, and left the house. (He was beginning now to use the term Mayor with something like derision in the privacy of the Famous Grocery Establishment.) On his way to the Blue Boar he bought copies of the *Penny Press* and the *Times*, peeped into them, but was no further informed ; for the *Halfpenny Press* had been able to steal a march on its more expensive contemporaries, so that news of the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate was its own exclusively.

Miss Miles, the manageress, was standing in the shadowy

depths of the bar, herself reading the *Halfpenny Press*. The gas-light, passing through a glass brandy-keg, made a yellow band across her face. For a moment she did not notice the ex-Mayor. Then, on his smiting the counter bell, she looked up :

"Oh. . . ."

"Small Scotch, please."

"What a shame!" said Miss Miles, holding out the paper towards Mr. Trotman. "What does it mean? Now please tell me. *You* ought to know."

"What does *what* mean?"

"Why, this about the Holy Mountain."

Hardly knowing himself, Mr. Trotman gained time by asking : "What do *you* think it means?"

"I call it a great shame. That's what *I* think."

Miss Miles poured out the whisky with great dignity, being truly indignant. Women in the bars of country towns have no chance of any society except they become religious. Only if they attend church with conspicuous regularity and make the acquaintance of the clergyman, who is usually not reluctant to attend to his semi-respectable, brightly spoken, worldly wise sisters after a course of the stodgy wives and daughters of the highly respectable—only then will they be talked to at the lych-gate, be allowed to make themselves useful at charitable entertainments, and even (sometimes) be invited out to tea and supper. Miss Miles was not ungrateful to her religious sponsors. She disapproved, as she felt they would do, of the change in the fortunes of the Holy Mountain. She thought, as everybody else did, that the Trotmans were making a fortune out of it. So she showed her indignation in the usual manner by refusing to converse unnecessarily with Mr. Trotman. She began posting up the day-book, and on the arrival of Miss Cora Sankey she went away.

Mr. Trotman, holding his glass in his hand, was looking meditatively at the bar clock.

"Hullo, Mr. ex-Mayor!" shouted Light-in-our-Darkness. "Is it true they're going to turn your Holy Mountain into a public-house?"

"Public-house. . . ."

"Yes. Public-house. Pro bono *publico*; that's public, isn't it? Eh?"

Mr. Trotman did not know. Indeed, he had gathered only a very hazy notion of the whole matter—what the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate was, what its name meant, what it purposed to do. First Miss Miles, then the Sankey; he felt as if the

powers of evil were compassing him round about. When Mr. Ganthorn appeared within the swing-doors, both Mr. Trotman and Miss Sankey turned towards him. The latter's penetrating voice gained the upper hand at once. "I say, Mr. Ganthorn, does Pro Bono Publico mean public-house? Mr. Trotman here says it doesn't."

"Pro Bono Publico," said Mr. Ganthorn, with mock deliberation. "Pro Bono Publico—a whisky and soda, please."

"Soda?"

"A whisky and soda, please.—Pro Bono Publico is Latin, or used to be in my young days, and means: *pro*, on behalf of; *bono*, the good; *publico*, of the public."

"Then it does mean a public-house—you see, Mr. Trotman. I knew I was right."

"It means yourself too, Miss Cora. Your good health. May you never grow less."

"What d'you mean now? Eh?"

"I mean that whisky is *pro bono publico*, and so is the fair flutterer who dispenses it. How greatly do her charms add to the charms of . . ."

"Get out!"

"—of mountain dew and aerated waters.—I say, Mr. ex-Mayor, what's this about your Holy Mountain?"

"How should I know?" replied Mr. Trotman, with a tug like a stage villain's at his drooping moustache. "Look here, Ganthorn, you had better go'n ask Sir Pushcott Bingley. If you want to know anything, you'd better ask him. As it's no business of yours, you'll enjoy doing so. And Sir Pushcott doesn't take kindly to questions, I can tell you. He'll be *your* match, anyhow. Nobody minds their own business in Trowbury. You're always making fun of everything. 'Tisn't right and proper. Some of us have to be serious sometimes. I might have told you, but I sha'n't now. I'm sick of it. Sick! You're always on the Twit, Twit, Twit. . . ."

Mr. Trotman went home to relieve the tension of his intellect over the misdeeds of one of his female clerks: she cut the cheeses so wastefully. As he went out of the Blue Boar porch, he heard Ganthorn and Miss Sankey singing within:

"Twit, Twit, Twit, Twit, Twitter!
An' it's Twit, Twit, Twit, Twit, Twitter! . . ."

And lastly he heard Miss Sankey's ringing "He-He-he-he-he!" It followed him, in his ears, across the Market Square.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Miss Sankey," said Ganthorn, "than are dreamt of in our pilosophy."

"What's that?"

"Hamlet."

"I say, who *was* Hamlet?"

"Mr. Trotman's uncle."

"*What?*"

"He was an author."

"Oh, do lend me one of his books. I do love reading: don't you?"

"Hamlet was a prince of Denmark."

"Oh, chuck it, Mr. Ganthorn.—Really?"

"Yes."

"Honour bright?"

"I do assure you. . . ."

"What a man you are, Mr. Ganthorn!—Good morning, Mr. Clinch."

The bar seemed to fill up as Mr. Clinch's figure (small boys declared that his chest had slipped down) advanced solemnly to the counter.

"Seen the paper?" Mr. Ganthorn asked.

"Damn queer—beg pardon—seems to me. . . ."

"Where's young Trotman all the time?"

"I've heard he drinks when his father's back's turned."

"What?"

"I give it you as I heard it. Anyway, he doesn't seem to have much to do with the Holy Mountain. His mother told my wife the other day that the Holy Mountain hasn't paid his doctor's bills yet."

"I don't believe it; trust old Trotman for that. He's just gone out in a devil of a temper because I asked him a question or two."

"How many whiskies did Mr. Trotman have last night, Miss Cora?"

"A dozen—more or less."

"Well, that's not enough to give *him* a next morning. Must be something else in the wind."

"Yes, but what did he have at home? Eh?"

"No telling. I should like to know, though, the bottom of the job."

"To tell you the truth, I don't believe he knows himself.—Well, working men must to work. Good morning."

Mr. Ganthorn gone, the conversation took a lower level. Men who had spent their lives in a triangle, the three corners of which were scandal, cash-books, and the parish pump, could not reasonably be expected to scale the financial heights of the Holy Mountain. At all events, Trowbury people never did.

To do him justice, Mr. Trotman himself came nearest to it; for the man undoubtedly had brains of a sort. He determined to have it out with his distinguished friend, Sir Pushcott Bingley, but unfortunately could not decide precisely how he was going to start having it out; and if matters had come to a head, if he had met the baronet face to face, Sir Pushcott's title would safely have awed the Famous Grocer into obsequious geniality.

Alec was found by his father sitting in the dining-room with a novelette on his knee. Mr. Trotman began by asking his son whether or not he had heard from his Sir Pushcott Bingley; went on to demand why he had not heard when he ought to have, and blamed him for not writing in order to have heard. "It's your Mountain, isn't it? The papers say so. If Sir Pushcott does all the work, of course he'll expect all the profit. You ought to have sense enough to see that."

Alec seldom tried to answer his father back. To interrupt a blare from a windbag requires far more controversial vigour than was ever possessed by the mover of the Holy Mountain. And if the windbag is a liar too. . . . What is to be gained by interrupting it, unless it can utterly burst?

"Why don't you do something?" Mr. Trotman again asked his son, without suggesting what might have been or should be done—for he had nothing to suggest, and that is why he bullied Alec. "You're as soft as a sleepy apple. Here's nothing at all come out of your Holy Mountain except a lot of gab in the newspapers. Why don't you look after it yourself, I say? You're too damn'd infernally lazy to do anything. You're always mooning round, and that's all you're good for. You've simply made the whole thing an excuse for staying on here when you ought to be at work—costing me immense sums for your doctors and your food, and your subscriptions, now, as Mayor of Trowbury—after all I've paid for your education! I won't stand any more of it, I tell you. You shall go to London and work—*work*, d'you hear?—if Sir Pushcott doesn't send something pretty soon to help pay for your keep."

Mr. Trotman moved towards the door. Grasping the handle, turning it even, his face flushed with pride of speech and his head bobbing emphatically, he brought his most penetrating gun into action: "I see that yellow girl is back at Clinch's. Never ought to be allowed in the town at all. I'll have none of your disgraceful immorality while you're under *my* roof. If I see you with her once, mind, you go to London by the very next train and have your luggage sent on after you."

Alec looked squarely at his father with his queer grey eyes.

Then the Famous Grocer, having exhausted both his eloquence and the filthy sediment of his imagination, retired before his son's eyes from the dining-room to the shop.

Alec had stood the siege. As his father's voice rose angrily in the shop, he changed his position in the chair, so as to warm his hands better before the fire, and muttered carelessly to himself: "Confounded old fool! I'll be level with him yet."

He pulled out of his pocket a photograph of Miss Julia Jepp. Tears filled his eyes—not the tears of mere sentiment.

Later in the day, he walked past the Emporium five times, because he wanted to look at it.

III

The wave of indignation which arose in England over the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate was of really fine proportions. Religious people were sorrowful enough, but the partisan parasites, who make a hobby of, or a living out of, religion, became nothing short of frenzied. Hence the tragi-comic procession that Miss Starkey saw pass across Oxford Circus. The Church blustered and attempted to dictate, whilst the other sects shrieked from ten thousand pulpits and meetings and denominational journals. The gods were exceeding troubled by their worshippers. What made the whole matter worse—and more amusing—was that nobody knew exactly the intentions of the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate. Faithful believers in the *Halfpenny Press* and in modern rectitude claimed that the Syndicate was actuated by the best of motives, namely, as its name implied, the good of the people. But they were hardly to be heard for the shriek, and when they did obtain a hearing, they were quickly snubbed as immoral and un-English. Therefore, being wise, they quietly let events take their course, and so did the Syndicate.

Indeed, the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate worked away on the Holy Mountain as if nothing at all were happening below, as if their right to the hill were absolutely undisputed. People saw gardens being laid out on the slopes, and scaffolding again erected on the Temple. The dome was taken off. "Why?" said everybody. Venturesome men did occasionally manage to set foot within the enclosures, but since each returned bearing a different tale, nobody was much the wiser.

What was the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate? Who was it? What was it going to do?

Something very irreligious and wicked, no doubt!

But the secret was well kept. And when London, soon tired,

as usual, of fixing its attention on one thing, began to veer in favour of the Syndicate, then the cat—a sort of beer-garden—was let out of the bag, and then, in truth, the denominationalists began to perceive Anti-Christ upon the Mountain. They helped each other develope such a rage and fear that one and all, forgetting their internecine warfare, began to call on the Archbishop of All the Empire, believing that in him they saw the strong man of the moment.

The Archbishop of All the Empire certainly was a strong man—muscularly and rhetorically. He had been chosen in order that the Church might have at its head a man whose vigour should appeal to the vigorous young colonies, and who would on that account, as the *Halfpenny Press* said, "further cement the ties which bound the Colonies indissolubly to the Motherland."

In youth he had been a mighty footballer, celebrated for his charging, tackling, kicking, and (in football pavilions) for his language. He had enabled Oxford to hold its own against the world—in football. Having dislocated his knee-cap when he was an undergraduate of Keble, in Oxford *v.* The Japanese Empire, he shaved off his moustache, and entered the Church. From him there came those famous sayings :

> "There may be more Christianity in the football field than in churches and Dorcas meetings."
> "Souls can be won upon the Empire's playing-grounds."

Far and wide was the Archbishop admired as a strong, tall, bullet-headed, black-jowled, black-eyed piece of manhood; brawny and strong-voiced, breezy and obstinate. It was said of him that he had never known indigestion or toothache, and that every morning, between his private devotions and the Eucharist, he spent a good half-hour with his home-exerciser and dumb-bells. When he was perambulating his Imperial diocese, on which, as he frequently reminded his flocks, the sun never set, he was the life itself of ships' passengers and of caravans. He organised deck games and after-dinner entertainments to such a degree of perfection that rich invalids paid large sums to make their sea-voyages abroad with the dear Archbishop, and an article appeared in the *Lancet* on *The Archbishop of All the Empire's Psycho-Therapeutic System in Hypochondria*. He was, in short, a singularly good specimen of the retired athlete who, instead of taking a public-house, had dropped most appropriately into a Government appointment ; into, that is, the Archbishopric of All the Empire.

To this man, now, the denominations turned, crying : "Archbishop, save yourself ! Me too !"

The *Halfpenny Press* remarked sarcastically that the sects could show their Christian spirit better by moving another mountain than by seeking to check national progress ; that if they had the faith, doubtless they could do so. A rumour spread about, and was carefully nursed, that the Government had promised, unofficially, to the sects any mountain or hill that they could move to the vicinity of London, as the Holy Mountain had been moved.

A second cry rose up : " Let the Archbishop move a hill ! "

Whereupon the Archbishop of All the Empire, athlete, eupeptic, and optimist, feeling strong in the strength of popularity, broke with his friend and patron, Sir Pushcott Bingley, and, for the first time in the history of the episcopacy, listened to the people's cry.

IV

West of Marlborough the Kennet Valley becomes not much more than a vast open depression in the Downs. Early one spring morning there crawled up the valley a curious procession, made up very largely of clergymen on dusty bicycles, who were pedalling laboriously, with red faces, out of Marlborough, along the white valley road, and up into the Downs towards Silbury Hill and Avebury. It was as if the waters of the river had turned into men and had started flowing the other way.

Then, about half-past ten o'clock, a still more curious, a grotesque, procession came up among the hills and proceeded with most dignified pace in the same direction. The *cortège* was composed of a number of huge variously-coloured motor-cars and an astonishing flock of dilapidated cabs. It seemed as if one small town could hardly have contained so many shabby cabs, rheumatic coachmen, and ancient, spavined, roaring horses. A sort of wave ran backwards and forwards, up and down the procession ; for the motor drivers were continually throttling down their engines to the pace of the cabs, and the cab-drivers as continually whipped their horses up in a vain attempt to outstrip the motors. The ruthless sunshine of the Downs and the large openness of the land lit up the procession with the utmost clearness, and at the same time dwarfed it. From one of the higher downs close by, it looked like a scene from an insects' comic opera.

In the foremost motor-car, a powerful six-cylinder road-racer, lent for the occasion, the Archbishop of All the Empire, well goggled, sat solidly beside the driver. His chaplain, in the *tonneau* behind, hugged the varnished box containing the pastoral staff, in order to keep it from wobbling or shaking.

Some of the people belonging to the houses alongside the road—at Preshute, Clatford, West Overton, and West Kennet—wondered whatever was afoot. Others, a minority, prided themselves on being in the know, and felt immensely important, and showed it. "They're going to move Silbury Hill to London, like Ramshorn Hill. The Archbishop of All the Empire is going to do a miracle." A Wiltshire antiquarian, a stumpy little man with a red face and a rapid tongue, bicycled hastily from group to group of onlookers. "Are they going to move Silbury Hill? They haven't given *me* notice of it. They *are* going to, d'you say? It's disgraceful. An irreparable loss to the county. Why, it's the largest artificial hill in Europe. I shall write to the papers and put a stop to it. I shall write to the *Times!*"

"Thee's better hurry up, guvnor, or thee's goin' to be too late."

Whereupon the antiquarian remounted his bicycle and rode off in the direction of Calne, saying: "I shall telegraph to the Prime Minister!" A cackle of laughter sped him on.

The Archbishop's procession came to a stop outside a house under Silbury Hill. In a dim little parlour, still smelling of the damped-down washing that was usually kept there, and of the plants that had been removed from the window, those who were to take part in the ceremony put on their vestments, and once more set out, on foot this time, for the hill itself—the Archbishop in his gorgeous cope and mitre, preceded by his chaplain bearing high the pastoral staff, and by a choir of boys and men in red cassocks and funny little things of surplices. Behind them, in order of precedence, marched many other clergymen, garbed, so it struck the eye, out there on the Downs, in vestments bought up at old clothes shops and in dirty boots; then a body of Nonconformist ministers who, having no vestments to wear, looked like birds in the moulting season; then an undisciplined line of the laity and of the people who had financed or otherwise helped towards the ceremony; and lastly the common people of the district, and the motor drivers and coachmen, who, in their own words, didn't want to miss the show. Reporters and special Press correspondents, who with worried or jeering faces ran up and down the line, snatching interviews, completed the semi-official, semi-secret party. Semi-official, semi-secret, because the ceremony was to be considered official and public only if, and after, it succeeded. Should it not succeed, the least said soonest mended. It was an ecclesiastical *coup d'état*, based less on faith in God than on faith in the well-tried adage, *Nothing succeeds like success.*

By the time the Archbishop and his retinue arrived at the actual foot of the acclivity, the hem of his gorgeous cope was powdered with chalk dust. One by one, most impressively, like a steeplechase, they passed up, over, and down the bare bank, set foot on the short grass, and began to climb. It was noticed that the Archbishop was rather breathless, and one of his clergy counselled him to rest awhile, sitting down—a piece of advice impossible to follow because a chalky patch on the seat of his cope would seriously have prejudiced the dignity of the supreme moment.

In keeping with the semi-secret nature of the proceedings was the absence of any hymn. The chauffeurs and drivers who remained below, saw the Archbishop and his company round him kneel upon the grass. Next they saw him rise up and take the pastoral staff into his hand. Every one else stayed kneeling around him—spots of black, white, and red on the sage-green hill. The upland wind whistled gently, with a plaintive sound as of distant sorrow in it, through the long dead grass-stalks from which last year's seed had fallen. The curious silence of the Downs fell on the scene like a sort of light that defines things even while it diminishes them. A lark rose gloriously into the sky. A rabbit or two peeped out. Small and aimless did the ceremony appear, amid the clearness, the largeness, the purity of the Downs.

The sun, sliding out from behind a cloud, shone upon the vestments of the Archbishop. But hardly had the watchers round about grasped the goodness of the omen, when a most secular-looking confabulation was seen to be taking place on the top of the hill. The Archbishop was seen to make a decision; and then the procession formed up again for marching down the hill. Some of the participants were comically hard put to keep their footing on the slippery dead grass of the slope. With one or two falls, however, they did arrive safely at the bottom.

For just after the Archbishop had recited solemnly: *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you;*—just when he was preparing to make the grand effort of faith;—his chaplain, with a sudden, startled expression, had got up from his knees and approached irreverently nearer, saying: "If you move the hill, your Grace, we shall go with it!"

His Grace glared a moment.

"Why didn't you remind me before?" he snapped.

The chaplain added in apologetic tones : "And if we go down again, your Grace, we shall spoil the ceremony."

"Of course we are going down," said the Archbishop with that rapid decision for which he was so famous. "Of course we are going down. Go in front, please."

The chaplain reassumed his ecclesiastical expression and led the way down the hillside.

Those who were down below—chauffeurs, drivers, common people—thought at first that the ceremony had been a failure. They peered and buzzed. The procession, however, got into order at the foot of the hill ; debated a little and moved further off ; consulted a little more and moved away still further. Indeed, if Silbury Hill was going to be moved, it was most essential to know where Silbury Hill began.

Once more, at a safe distance, everybody knelt. Once more, the Archbishop began the special form of service that he and his domestic chaplain had composed. A cloud came over the sun. All the sullenness of nature, all the obduracy of the earth, was reflected from the long dun-coloured slopes. The Archbishop rose to his feet. The remainder abased themselves, stealing sly glances through praying fingers.

What, some of them wondered, what was going on in the mind of that vested Prince of the Church ? Was he filled with prayer and faith above the measure of ordinary men's ? He spread out his hands towards heaven and the hill. Did God hear him ? Was the hill beginning to move ?

On the contrary, it was the Archbishop who moved.

He fell forward on his face. He mimicked the fall of Alexander Trotman down that other Holy Mountain, that bogus Holy Mountain of the music-hall stage.

They ran towards him ; respectfully pulled him about ; turned him over on his back ; and—in a phrase consecrated by death—life was found to be extinct.

A strange conservatism asserted itself ; the Archbishop's body in its cope—the dead athlete in the Church's uniform—was placed, not in the comfortable, swift motor-car which had brought him to Silbury Hill, but in a rickety old cab. His mitre, which fell off into the roadway while the cope and its dead human contents were being juggled through the narrow doorway of the cab, was flung carelessly upon the front seat. A man with a red face, old top-hat, a livery coat above and frayed check trousers below, drove the body back to Marlborough. The motor-cars and the other cabs followed after. Never since he was carried off the football field, arms and legs hanging limply down, had

the Archbishop proceeded anywhere in so undignified and so bedraggled a manner.

After they were all gone, the sun still shone gloriously upon the pure wide spaces; the larks still sang; and Silbury Hill still stood in the place where it was heaped up by men who toiled when busy England was marsh, moor, and forest; when the changeless Downs, under prehistoric sunlight, were much as they are to-day.

It was said by some that the great Archbishop's faith had killed him. Others held that the dear Archbishop had been too good to live. The coroner's verdict was syncope; an athlete's heart degenerated by a sedentary life; death accelerated by fatigue and excitement.

The religious organisations in their disappointment found it hard to treat in kindly fashion the memory of the deceased prelate. He had failed them; had been rotten at the core. His degenerate heart had been unfitted for spiritual gymnastics. Yet they *had* to have another Holy Mountain, for if they did not, they would fail to regenerate the nation, and, moreover, they would lose prestige and be exposed to the ridicule of the *Halfpenny Press*. Their case was desperate. What could be done? they asked.

A celebrated geologist, an F.R.S. who was heavily fee'd for his advice, declared weightily that there was nothing in the geological formation beneath Silbury Hill which could prevent it from being moved bodily as Ramshorn Hill had been. The artificial hill itself might be at fault, but not geology. A body of scientists held out hope that something might be done in time if a few philanthropists or, say, an American millionaire would found and endow a special institution for scientific research into mountain-moving. A Labour Member declared that he could move a mountain from anywhere to anywhere, given time and money and the unemployed and socialism.

The Bishop of London was asked to make a second spiritual attempt on a day to be set apart for national prayer, and he promised most carefully to consider the matter. Denominational hopes ran high. But finally he said that under the sad circumstances, and considering the many calls on his time, he hardly thought it proper to act where his late chief had failed. Thereupon, in its headlines, the *Penny Press* proclaimed:

DIGNIFIED ATTITUDE OF THE BISHOP OF LONDON,

and the *Halfpenny Press* shouted:

BISHOP OF LONDON FUNKS IT.

A very popular young Nonconformist preacher did very secretly and very unsuccessfully make a second attempt. Silbury Hill refused to budge. The sects, made to feel more distinctly than ever that they were on their trial, became correspondingly acrimonious. People jibbed at their verbal antics. Two waves of dissatisfaction, one from Castle Street, Trowbury, and the other from Halfpenny Press Buildings, London, seemed to be spreading rapidly over the whole of the country, like ripples from two stones, a small and a large, thrown into a pond.

V

Mr. Trotman's threat that, if the Holy Mountain did not soon produce money, Alec should go to London and earn his living came, of course, to nothing. Alec could hardly have earned enough to keep a tramp; certainly not enough for his tonics and patent foods. Besides, he was Mayor of Trowbury, *ex-officio* member of his father's household. Worst of all, Mr. Trotman had to pay his subscriptions not only to all sorts of charities, but to those presentations which are continually being made in places like Trowbury, probably because the promoters have too little to do and too few brains to bring themselves before the local public in any other way.

At first, Alec would have liked very well to go to London, where his Julia was. He might have found out why she was so long in replying to his letters, why she had so coldly requested him to write no more and had ended up her last letter with: "I can never be yours, Mr. Trotman, and you must learn to take *NO* for an answer."

On Julia's return to the Emporium, the slighting remarks of his father, and this time of his mother too, soon informed him of the fact. How he hated his parents for what they said about his Julia! How he boiled to give them what they gave! But he had always had difficulty in saying the things he imagined; his best retorts had always come to him perhaps days afterwards. And now, since his illness, he scarcely felt fit to get into a downright temper. He took to heart old Nurse Parfitt's saying, "I keeps meself, to meself, I do." He determined to do the same. "The time will come! Ah, the time *will* come!" It felt fine to repeat that to himself. He lounged about the mayoral residence, behind and above the Famous Grocery, for ever irritating his father by an apathy which hid from his parents a gathering together of his forces, a growing devotion to one idea—his Julia.

Alec was one of those in whom feeling almost entirely takes the place of ordered thought; whose mental processes neither express themselves in conversation, nor can be precisely expressed in words. An harmonium might have expressed his solemn, heavier moods, a whistle-pipe his merriment.

Shortly after the failures to move Silbury Hill, he received a letter, marked *Strictly Private and Confidential*, from the Permanent Grand Committee (Reconstituted). Would he consent to receive a deputation with a view to his removing another hill from Wiltshire to the neighbourhood of London?

"What's that?" asked Mr. Trotman, breaking off short a complaint about the staleness of the bread and the servant's lack of enthusiasm in eating up the household's stale crusts. When any member of his family received a letter the contents of which he could not succeed in reading—by the simple process of opening it on delivery—he always asked in a commanding tone: "What's that?"

"I don't know," replied Alec, blushing and pocketing the letter.

"Let me see."

"Let your father see it, Allie dear," said Mrs. Trotman.

Alec handed over the letter. "*I* don't know what they mean."

"H'm!" his father grunted. "It's easy enough to see what they mean—a very businesslike communication—but I don't quite see what they're trying to get at."

"Why," said Mrs. Trotman, who now had an opportunity of glancing herself, "they want Alec to move another mountain, 'to be devoted exclusively to religious purposes.' Allie dear . . ."

"What do they want another for? They've made mess enough of one."

"That wasn't Alec's fault, James."

"Well, it's perfectly clear to anybody but a fool that there's no money in the job."

"You don't know that yet. When Sir Pushcott *does* pay . . ."

"*He'll* never pay. He's fairly diddled the lot of us."

"I suppose you think that if Alec hadn't moved the Holy Mountain, you'd have gone on being Mayor for years, and then they'd have knighted you when there was a royal visit?"

Mr. Trotman knew better than to attack his wife in fair verbal fight. "No such thing! There's no money in this mountain-moving. I always said so."

"James!"

"Well, d'you think you could move another hill, Alec?"

Alexander stared a moment. "No, I don't think I could. I don't know how I moved Ramshorn Hill—if I *did* do it."

"Of course you did it . . ." Mrs. Trotman was beginning.

"That settles it," snapped the ex-Mayor. "Write and tell 'em you won't—not you can't. Mention your health, d'you see? Let me look at the letter before it goes.—My boots, please. Got to see some one on business. Sharp's the word!"

He lighted one of his cheap morning cigars and went out of the room, declaring with the air of a prophet: "There's no money in this sort of thing. Not a penny piece!"

Alec seated himself in his father's armchair and lighted a cigarette; for he had begun to smoke in spite of his mother's fear for his health and his father's philosophic declaration: "A totally unnecessary expense! If you never smoke, you'll never want to."

VI

Whatever Mr. Trotman might have said at home, he could not forbear boasting at the Blue Boar that his son, the son of Alderman James Trotman, had been asked to move another mountain. And he further said that his son had no intention of considering the offer, not yet at any rate. Even a price (this was mentioned in confidence) had been suggested for the proposed miracle, but no more hills would his son move unless everything, everything, was down in black and white.

Mr. Ganthorn, between two sips of stout, called it a case of *reductio ad absurdum*, a sarcasm that the ex-Mayor felt rather than understood.

News of the letter from the Permanent Committee (Reconstituted) worked round to Julia. It seemed incredible. But she was still more surprised on receiving a note the next early-closing day:

"Come out to Nurse's to tea. Don't fail. Important—
Alec.

"Your loving
"EDIE."

Julia donned her new dress—she had been able to get herself one, and Mrs. Clinch had given her another, since her return to Trowbury—and set out on foot for Mrs. Parfitt's.

Just where the Downs proper begin, where the hedges give way to flowery banks, she saw Miss Starkey coming to meet her, also in a new and, to tell the truth, rather a startling costume.

"Julie! Dear!"

Miss Starkey's embrace had a certain adroitness, a whiff of professionalism, about it. Julia had never quite liked her friend's kisses. At times. . . . But she was not one to suspect her friends. Miss Starkey, she thought, had had her life's lesson. Now, of course, she was extra help in a West-End bar. Julia thought she was lucky to get there, for she knew how pitilessly women are punished for a five minutes' plunge into nature.

"What is it?" she asked. "I'm so pleased to see you, dear, but you know you ought not to have come. Those—those liars will turn you out again if they catch you."

"Oh, no, they won't. I've got money enough for cab-hire. Tradesmen and policemen always respect a cab. I came out to Nurse's in a cab—a beastly old growler with a perfect fool of a driver. What cabs they do have in places like this. . . ."

Miss Starkey was plainly beating about the bush. "How deadly dull it is down here," she began again.

"What did you come down for, dear?" Julia asked.

"I'm not so sure I'll tell you now."

"Edie!"

"Well, look here. . . ."

They were walking along under a glorious south-western sky. Huge clouds, in motion like great laden ships, sailed majestically over the tops of the Downs. The tumultuous confusion of spring was stirring all around. They did not specially notice the day; it was not, indeed, till their conversation became absorbing that their attention was directed upon much else than keeping their new skirt-tails out of the mud. But they breathed the deeper; walked the faster; and who can say that it was not the stir of the season and the spaciousness of sky and Downs, which gave more breadth to their thoughts, more openness to their speech, more candour to their conversation? Certainly it was so with Julia.

"Look here," said Miss Starkey, "I've got to know a man. . . ."

(Had she been the old Edith Starkey, or even a barmaid, she would have called him a gentleman.)

"—I've got to know a man—talking over the bar, you know—he's a sort of newspaper man, journalist—a man who writes for the *Halfpenny Press*—he calls himself a slap-up journalist when he's a bit on—*you can't take a rise out o' me* sort of thing—and, talking over the counter, he told me—well, something about the Holy Mountain, something your Alec would cut off his ears to hear, or his beastly old man would, anyhow. And as

I had five pounds to spare—a silly old fellow, nasty fat old chap with a red nose and a hobnail liver, I should think, asked me to marry him, and when I wouldn't he gave me a fiver—that's life in a bar all over ;—well, I thought I'd come down and tell you, because it's important ; only you won't tell anybody I told you, will you ? "

" Well, what is this fine news ? " asked Julia, with the feigned good-humour of anxiety.

" It's like this. . . . This young man—he's not half a bad boy—bit conceited—he was rather up the pole and said he wanted sympathy and was sick of keeping his ambitions to himself—he's Sir Pushcott Bingley's secretary for all the Holy Mountain work, so *he* knows ; he said Sir Pushcott Bingley has sub-let the Holy Mountain to himself."

" What *do* you mean ? You're teasing me, Edie."

" No, I'm not. I mean what I say. Sir Pushcott Bingley has sub-let the Holy Mountain to himself and one or two other rich men. They've made a syndicate, a private syndicate, *not* a registered company like they ought to."

" What ever's that ? I don't understand business like you. I thought 'twas let to a Pro Bono Publico company."

" That's it ! Sir Pushcott and his friends, they are the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate. I'll tell you from the beginning and then you'll understand. I made Johnny Fulton explain it all carefully ; kept on at him ; said I was going to start a millinery company myself. Pretty trouble 'twas ! Sir Pushcott Bingley, acting for Alec Trotman, let the Holy Mountain to the Permanent Committee—the religious people. Didn't he ? He let it, in the first place, by the month, for six months, the rent to be paid in advance. Well, even now they've only paid up the first two months' rent. They thought that when they'd had their Grand United Opening Ceremony of the Imperial Temple, they'd be able to collect money to carry on the good work, and then they'd be able to pay up their back rent. As they were so behindhand with the rent, Sir Pushcott could practically send them going at a moment's notice. . . . D'you understand that ? "

" Yes, I think so."

" That's all right, then. Well, he gave them enough rope and, like he thought they would, they hanged themselves. The Grand United Opening Ceremony was a frost. Sir Pushcott didn't see where the money was coming from, and besides he had another little plan in his noddle. So he turned them out, bag and baggage, and they couldn't go to law, because for one thing

they'd have lost the case, and for another thing, Sir Pushcott knew they daren't make public how much of the money they had paid to themselves and to secretaries and those sort of people Him, and some one else I mustn't say, and a rich City man, a Jew formed what they called the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate to take over the Holy Mountain. Then Sir Pushcott, acting for Alec, leased the Mountain to the Syndicate—that is, to himself and the some one else and the Jew. . . ."

"What are they going to do with it?"

"Wait a minute; that's what I'm coming to. It's a dead secret *who* it is and *what* it is. The Syndicate has got separate offices in Cheapside, with Johnny Fulton supposed to be manager, and no one knows anything, though one or two people are getting rather nosey. They're going to spring it all at once. The place is to be opened as a huge amusement affair, with a music-hall in the Imperial Temple and a beer-garden on the roof where you can look over the whole of London. Of course, they'll do just what they like, because, you see, Sir Pushcott has the *Halfpenny Press* behind him and he could say things about almost every big man in London. *I* think the Holy Mountain is going to be a ripping place, and they'll haul in money simply hand over foot, Johnny Fulton says."

"But they've made Alec break his promise to let the Church have it. He promised. . . ."

"Pooh! what does that matter? Besides, he's had precious little to do with it. The Holy Mountain is going to be the jolliest place round London. Johnny Fulton has promised me a free pass. He says that as a music-hall and beer-garden the Imperial Temple will be worth . . ."

"I think it's all of it very disgusting."

They were quite near Mrs. Parfitt's little cottage. Julia's disgust was sincere. Beautiful scenes; continued attention, such as listening to a long conversation or reading a book through at a sitting; or, indeed, any long emotional stress, have almost always the effect of setting a man or woman into a different relation to the everyday world. From the new elevation, he or she looks down on mankind struggling; looks down on fate itself; and becomes, till the mood wears off, recklessly frank.

There was now, in Julia's speech, such a fearnought sincerity that she half frightened Edith Starkey, and when she had finished, she was more than a little frightened at herself. Nurse Parfitt's welcome, it was, which brought her back to earth, her same self, as it seemed, yet not the same in outlook and intention; not the

same in regard to Alec; for she felt that Alec had been cheated.

"There now, my dears!" exclaimed the old woman. "How glad I be to see 'ee again! I've a-been summut lonely be meself an' so many things has happened. Now do 'ee take hold the little 'en a minute while I d'go out an' make that there kettle boil. You be quite a grand Lun'on lady now, Miss Starkey, my dear."

Julia took the baby while Miss Starkey removed her hat before Mrs. Parfitt's broken scrap of looking-glass. The baby nestled down in her arms, looked up, and crowed to her; and something of the exalted frankness that remained prompted her to say:

"Edie, dear, I think he *is* rather like Alec."

"Alec! Why should he be like Alec? Alec Trotman didn't have anything to do with him."

"But you told me. . . ."

"A soft boy like that! With not a penny to bless himself with! His old man takes care of that."

"But you said quite plainly. . . . Don't you remember that evening at your lodgings in Trowbury?"

"No, I don't. I don't remember anything I said then. A lot of nonsense. You were kind, old Julie, I know; and that's all. If you'd like to know really, I'll tell you. 'Twas that—that beastly old Blue Boar, Ganthorn, and he's been sending me money since, when he's got to, to keep me quiet."

Julia got up and put the baby down in a chair. "Edie, I must go now. Really. I can't wait for tea. Don't stop me. I'll see you to-morrow, when I've had time. . . . No, don't say anything. Good-night."

Something in Julia's voice, as though she were forcing it up her throat through a wad of wool, did prevent Miss Starkey from saying anything.

The last thing Julia heard was the cry of the baby she had so abruptly put down in a chair instead of safely on the floor. She even resented in part its not being Alec's. On the way into Trowbury, she decided to beard the Famous Grocer in his Famous Grocery. She would see the Trotmans. She must see Alec and explain. She didn't care how Mrs. Trotman sniffed and Mr. Trotman bullied. She had done Alec wrong, and wrong had been done to him. She would put things right. She would tell him. She would tell him that evening. She would . . .

It must be confessed that her motives, though all good, were nevertheless a little mixed.

VII

Mrs. Trotman was in the kitchen making marmalade; that is to say, she was superintending the servant, who had not yet that day been given time to change her dress. For with a patent orange-slicer Mrs. Trotman had very nearly cut off the top of her finger, and now, with the finger in a rag dolly, she was instructing the servant in the right and wrong way of working the machine. "We sha'n't get done to-day," she was saying, "if you don't hurry up. Put your hands to it properly. You're afraid of your fingers."

"I *am* hurrying up, 'm, all I can."

"There! do be careful or you'll cut your finger too."

A ring at the front-door bell. . . .

"Who's that?" exclaimed Mrs. Trotman. "I'll go. No, you'd better go, Jane. I've got this finger. It may be the vicar about the parish tea."

Jane held out her juicy hands helplessly.

"Go on!" urged Mrs. Trotman. "Wash your hands, stupid! You'll make every door-handle in the house sticky."

Julia was on the point of ringing the bell a second time when a flushed and dirty Jane opened the door. Was Mr. or Mrs. Trotman in? she asked. Jane thought so, and the mere young lady from the Emporium was, in accordance with the household etiquette, left standing on the door-mat, where she could smell plainly the sickly, sticky odour of squashed oranges and boiling sugar—a smell that she always expected afterwards on entering the Famous Grocery.

"Please 'm," said Jane, quite audibly in the kitchen, "it's that Miss Jepp from Clinch's."

"What *does* she want? Ask her into the sitting-room, not the drawing-room—d'you hear?—and shut the door."

As soon as the door was shut, Julia being safe within, Mrs. Trotman made a rush for her bedroom, to titivate, as she would have said. She tore off the dolly, revived the bleeding, poured some cold water into her washhand basin and swished her finger round and round in it. The blood spread through the water in bright red whorls. Mrs. Trotman felt faint. (It was part of her life's ceremonial, a lady-like elegance, to feel faint at the sight of blood.) She sniffed, therefore, at a bottle of salts till her eyes ran and she had to catch hold of the bed-rail.

She became thoroughly flustered, her brain all of a caddle. It was not the best preparation for meeting Julia with proper dignity.

But meanwhile, in the sitting-room :

Alec had been lounging as usual in his father's armchair. He did not trouble to move, or even turn his head, until he heard to a certainty that the footstep in the room was an unusual one. Then he looked round, jumped up.

" Julie ! "

" Alec ! "

With the sensitive ear of a boy baulked in love, he detected the change in Julia's voice. He heard again the former motherly tone. He took Julia into his arms—and was surprised to find her there.

Had any one looked at the little scene without imagination, they might have found it rather repulsive, or else rather funny, according to whether prudishness or humour was topmost in their mind. The very callow youth—the motherly Emporium young lady, already approaching a premature middle age—the love-tones in their voices—a lovers' embrace—the love-experience of generations suddenly and grotesquely come to a head in this hitherto listless youth and this rather too much dressed woman. . . . Aye ! it was funny, that kiss of theirs, and it was repulsive, there in that ugly sitting-room ; it was both funny and repulsive by contrast ; that is to say, the sitting-room was funny and repulsive ; but their coming together was one of the things they will remember in heaven, if so be they ever get there.

" What ever's brought you ? " Alec asked.

" I've heard something important about your Holy Mountain."

" Why didn't you write to me ? What made you so queer ? "

" Alec dear, it wasn't my fault. I'd rather not tell you. You don't mind, do you ? "

In fact, Julia no longer wanted to explain. They looked into one another's eyes. A force, like gravity in its almost inhuman persistence, was drawing them together again. . . .

" Here's the old woman ! " said Alec.

They sprang apart.

Mrs. Trotman, hurrying into the room, either saw or divined that something untoward was in the air. She drew herself up, still holding the handle of the door, and with that dignity which had so distinguished her as Mayoress, she inquired : " To what do I owe the pleasure ? "

" All right," said Alec, not without dignity on his part too. " Julia has come to tell us something about the Holy Mountain—something important."

" Julia ? "

"Well, then, Miss Jepp."

"And what has Miss Jepp to tell us about the Holy Mountain?"

"You're being deceived, madam. Cheated!"

"Oh, nonsense! Alec's friend, Sir Pushcott Bingley, will see to that."

"It's him who's doing it!"

Mrs. Trotman was quiet for a short while. She drew up a blind, rearranged an antimacassar. When she did speak, it was with something less of the mayoral dignity. "Mr. Trotman must hear of this. But please tell me. . . . I don't mind letting you know that we *have* heard something. Won't you sit down?"

"They're making it into a sort of big public-house—a music-hall and beer-garden in the Temple!" said Julia, plunging straight into her tale.

"But please begin at the beginning.—Alec, dear, go and ask the vicar how many pounds of tea he thinks we shall want at the parish tea to-morrow.—Mr. Trotman provides the tea, you know, Miss Jepp."

"Not me! I'm going to hear. It's my Mountain and you can't say it isn't."

Mrs. Trotman turned to Julia with a jangle of her bracelets and the sweetest of her smiles. "So kind of you to come!"

Miss Starkey's account, which was somewhat confused, had been plainness itself compared with Julia's. She, woman-like, remembered everything but the hard facts. During the interview, however, Mrs. Trotman saw more and more that there was good reason to be amiable, and in the end she confessed: "Sir Pushcott has told us nothing. He *must* be making money out of it; the rents of public-houses are enormous, I know; but we haven't seen a penny here except the few pounds he sent us at first. When Mr. Trotman writes we only get a letter saying nothing from the secretary. I *always* thought it would come to this. Sir Pushcott has no religious principle; none whatever. You must stay to supper, Miss Jepp, and tell Mr. Trotman about it. I don't think I understand everything exactly, but he'll soon see into it."

"The Temple a beer-garden!" echoed Miss Jepp.

"And Sir Pushcott's sent us nothing, neither money nor news!" re-echoed Mrs. Trotman.

"Strikes me his promises are like pie-crust. Never could eat that," added Alec, with shocking levity.

"And who did you say told you?" Mrs. Trotman asked.

"Miss Starkey."

"The one who used to be here, in the shop?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

Mrs. Trotman went to have a look at the larder, confident that the presence of the servant, whom she told to lay supper, would prevent anything improper between Alec and Miss Jepp. She called in the shop for a tin of ox-tongue, and, generally, arranged for such a spread as Castle Street custom and house pride would have obliged her to lay before her worst enemy.

Mr. Trotman, home early because sent for from the Blue Boar, was most gallantly polite to Julia. He hoped she would not object to the simplicity of the tinned fare, and cracked jokes at his wife's expense. "Plain but good, is our motto, Miss Jepp, in food—and people!"

Then the tale is told. Mr. Trotman, seated on one side of the fireplace with his whisky and after-supper cigar, listens judicially, explaining from time to time the hidden business motives of the events that Julia relates. Julia herself, in the basket chair on the other side, leans forward with her hands in her lap, twiddling her fingers, her face alight with talking. She looks like a girl again when she raises her head. Mrs. Trotman sits in a low chair between them, and Alec sprawls half-way across the far side of the table. The gaslight brings out the bony substructure of their faces. The air is full of important matters and of trivial smells—whisky, tobacco, scent, cigarettes. London and the great are on their trial within the sanctity of an English home. The mammon of success and unrighteousness is brought to judgment before England's middle-class ideal.

Julia, unfortunately, being ignorant of the ways of mammon major, was quite unable to make his operations clear. She emphasised the sacrilegiousness of the affair to ears that were all agog for the monetary side of it. She was more inaccurate than she or the Trotmans knew. Her striving after truth ended in lies and confusion. Mr. Trotman's business acumen was baffled.

"It's very evident that something's up," said he wisely.

"It ought to be stopped," said Julia, thinking only of the Temple beer-garden.

"Sir Pushcott's certainly doing something he hasn't told us about."

"You ought to stop it."

"D'you know, Miss Jepp, I think we ought to see Miss Starkey before taking action in the matter."

"James!" This from Mrs. Trotman.

"We *must* be certain of our ground, my dear, and therefore we *must* see Miss Starkey."

"If she comes into the house, I go out."

"Don't be silly. Business is business. This is a business matter, nothing to do with you.—Will you, can you, bring Miss Starkey here to-morrow morning, Miss Jepp?"

"I'll try," said Julia. "If she'll come. . . ."

She glanced anxiously at the clock and got up to go. It was fully time for locking the young ladies' door at the Emporium.

Mrs. Trotman showed her out. She pressed her hand even affectionately. "You won't mind—will you?—if I ask you to bring Miss Starkey in through Cherrybud Lane and the garden —not the front door—you understand—you know. . . . We shouldn't like anybody to see. . . ."

Alec brushed past his mother. "I'll take Julia home, mother."

Very slowly they walked down to the Emporium.

"It must be stopped," repeated Julia.

"All right, Julia," said Alec airily.

Another kiss, and another "We'll manage 'em!" from Alec. The Emporium door banged. He trotted home, tiptoed past the sitting-room, and slipped into bed.

What did *he* care about the Holy Mountain?

VIII

When an emporium has had to beg one of its young ladies to return, it becomes much more lenient to requests for hour off. Mr. Clinch grudgingly allowed Julia to go out for the morning. Mrs. Clinch added that they might be able to do without her till tea-time.

Julia's life seemed to flow backwards and forwards along the London Road, between the Emporium and Mrs. Parfitt's, between Trowbury and the Downs. She thought, while she was walking out, of all the times she had tramped that way. Various objects by the roadside revived momentarily various bygone feelings. It was a mixed reverie that would look absurd if written in cold black ink. She had not been on that road in such a happy frame of mind since the evening when Ramshorn Hill had moved. "No, but we bicycled then," she said to herself. She remembered the evening, every bit of it. Now she was going confidently to fetch Edith Starkey for the confounding of everybody who was trying to cheat Alec, her Alec, over the Holy

Mountain. Mr. Trotman, he was a nasty old man and she didn't like him, but *he*'d see to it, *he*'d put it to rights.

Before she arrived even within sight of Mrs. Parfitt's cottage, she saw a milk-cart outside the Three Wains public-house, and in the milk-cart she saw a bandbox which she was quite sure belonged to Edith Starkey. And as she was taking a peep at the label, she heard Edith Starkey's voice inside the Three Wains; a merry laugh and a loud guffaw. She walked shyly into the open door, looked through a little jug-and-bottle window. Miss Starkey was there. She was joking and laughing with a strong brown-faced young carter, who was plainly proud of the young lady's distinguished attentions. His weathered countenance, the moustache and brows of which were lighter than his skin, and his bright eyes, followed her about the room. Miss Starkey preened and cooed under the half-shy, half-bold regard of such a splendid young human animal. He thought her a fine hearty lady; he was sadly idealising her. And she was idealising him. She had seldom met his like. It was a radiantly healthy, clean-limbed young fellow, who in his way treated her with much politeness. In their little idyl, their morning bacchanal, extremes met for a few minutes on their only common ground, and for a few minutes both desired what neither had and neither would willingly have kept for long.

Julia tapped diffidently, and tapped again.

"Just a mo', Jimmy," said Miss Starkey.

"Oh-aouw!"

"Hullo, Julie! What d'you want."

"Mr. Trotman wants me to take you in there to tell him about the Holy Mountain."

"Does he? Wants to make use of me again, does he? Come off his righteous perch, eh? You can tell him I may call somewhen in the day."

"They asked me to take you there myself. They're very upset and I couldn't explain properly, like you can. And Edie . . . Mrs. Trotman wants me to take you in through Cherrybud Lane and the garden way. That's why."

Tactless Julia! somewhat too straightforward to be a go-between. Miss Starkey faced round both literally and metaphorically. "You can tell the Trotmans to go to the devil—all of 'em—d'you hear!"

Julia stood hesitating.

"I'm going back to London straight away. This young man is taking me to the station, ain't you, Jimmy?"

"Oh-aouw!"

"If you wanted to see me, what did you go away last night for? I came down on purpose to see you."

Miss Starkey returned to her carter, laughing merrily again, whilst Julia retreated from the Three Wains, glancing anxiously up and down the road to see if anybody who mattered had caught sight of her. She walked with a step suddenly grown tired back to the Emporium and set to work on a yard or two of material which was afterwards to figure in the window as *Modish Blouse. The Latest, 7s. 11¾d.*

The land of her castles in the air had always been subject to earthquakes.

IX

The result of Miss Starkey's flying visit to Trowbury was at least threefold. In the first place, Julia, feeling unusually lonely, allowed Alec formally to muddle through the formal question, as formally accepted him, and formally wore a pretty engagement ring. In the second place, Mr. Trotman wrote to Sir Pushcott Bingley, demanding in full an account of the Holy Mountain and threatening to instruct his solicitor. And, lastly, Alec wrote secretly and posted with unnecessary precautions a letter to the baronet in which he asked boldly for enough money to get married on.

Sir Pushcott was wanting a change: the spring had got into his blood too. He decided on a brief motor tour into the West Country. Mr. Trotman's threat to instruct his solicitor might mean a certain amount of trouble—some one else to be squared. Sir Pushcott, therefore, thought it would be well to break his tour at Trowbury and to see how things really stood.

So, one evening again, his large motor-car buzzed over the Downs like an incalculably swift insect and drew up outside the Famous Grocery Establishment. Mr. Trotman was at home. Sir Pushcott flattered himself that he knew his man quite well enough for all practical purposes, and, on being shown into the frowsy, fripperied dining-room, he led off his hand at once.

"Good evening, Mr. Trotman. I have received your letter and have dealt with it myself. You understand, of course, that the Committee failed, after paying only two instalments of its rent. Now, if you like to provide the capital—a hundred thousand or so—and meet the pending law-suits and arbitrations, and take the whole matter out of my hands, it will be a great weight off my shoulders. If you are not prepared to lay down that sum, you will be well advised to leave the matter entirely to me. As I told you before, I have some influence in addition to

the capital. In a short time, thanks to the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate, there will be money coming in over and above the expenses, and then your son will receive his income regularly, and so forth. If you do wish to take it out of my hands, perhaps you—your son, that is to say—will have the kindness to let me know at once in writing."

'Mendment Trotman assumed an air of apologetic defiance. "But . . ." he began.

"I am afraid I haven't time to discuss the matter now. Those are my terms. My car is outside—due at Bath for dinner to-night. Good evening."

Sir Pushcott went out, by mistake, through the shop.

A little way down the street, when the car had slowed down behind a straw waggon, Sir Pushcott's hand was grasped, and he heard Alec saying in a voice much cheerier than he had ever heard from him before : "Did you get my letter, Sir Pushcott ? You haven't answered it."

"Hullo, Alec ! Is that you ? How are you now ? Yes, I got your letter. Let me see, what was it you wanted money for ? "

"To get married on. . . ." Alec's face was glowing.

"Why, what a set of harpies you country people are ! What do you want to get married for, eh ? "

Alec blushed. "Please . . ." he said in confusion, then stopped short, like a small shy child out to tea and in want of a second helping.

Sir Pushcott, like many men who pride themselves on hardness, cuteness and so on, was touched by the sweethearting of the younger folk. Spite of immense success in life, his own marriage had not quite come up to his expectations, nor yet had it been bad enough utterly to destroy his sense of romance. Alec's funny speech, his embarrassment, and the happy new hopefulness in his face, touched the heart of the Director of the *Halfpenny Press*, lifted the hatches of a little stream deep down within him ; which caused him to act neither as the man he aimed at being, nor as the man he had become, but rather as the man he might have been.

"What does your father say to it ? " he asked, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh, he . . . He doesn't know. He'll . . . I don't know what."

"Come back to him with me," said Sir Pushcott. "Jump in. I'll fix you up."

Alec led Sir Pushcott straight to the sitting-room, and once more Mr. Trotman received a frontal attack.

"Your son, Mr. Trotman, tells me he is about to be married, and . . ."

"Nothing of the sort!"

"—and I shall be pleased to send him a little cheque—five hundred pounds or so—on account of the Holy Mountain, in advance, you understand.—Let me know the day, Alec. Where are you going to spend the honeymoon? Eh? Don't know? London? If so, I'm not sure I can't lend you a little house of mine just in the centre of all the theatres and sights. Good-night, my boy. Good luck!"

Off sped the motor-car to Bath. Alec, the bird in his hand at last, slipped out to the Emporium. Mr. Trotman called loudly about the house for his wife.

A couple of days afterwards, Trowbury had the pleasure of reading in the *Halfpenny Press* a column headed:

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

ALEC TROTMAN'S ROMANCE

THE COMING WEDDING AT TROWBURY

And that, of course, sealed the betrothal.

X

Alec did not fail to wonder, during the next few weeks, if anybody could be quite as happy as himself; so pleasant it was to be engaged under the protection of Sir Pushcott Bingley. And besides, his Julia was received at Castle Street. Mr. Trotman sat up in his armchair, smoking his cheap cigars, and discoursed most civilly on the management of great businesses—grocery shops, town councils, Holy Mountains, the *Halfpenny Press*. He even began to take a pride in Julia Jepp, and declared her to be a very sensible young woman; for was it not settled that she was to marry his son, enter into his family, and become in a sense his property? Nothing that was the property of James Trotman could be allowed to be bad; else it was not really his property, but a burden unfairly forced upon him. Alec had been all his life a property and an insufferable burden.

When they could escape from the paternal sunshine, Alec walked Julia out. Accept Mrs. Clinch's invitation to tea at the Emporium was the one thing he could not bring himself to do. The other young ladies would have stared and giggled so. But they took tea more than once at old Nurse Parfitt's, amid floods

of the old woman's talk. People stopped them in the street to congratulate them, and with kindly voices asked impertinent questions. Presents arrived at Castle Street ; presents from all over the country ; which, as Mr. Trotman remarked, when they were set out on a table in the drawing-room, did him proud. Alec and Julia strolled about the outskirts of the town, entering prim front gardens and peeping into the windows of empty houses, not because they wanted to rent a house—nothing of that sort was to be decided till after the honeymoon—but because houses and firesides, dear private places, had become of special interest to them. Alec's health improved rapidly. He stood more and more on his own feet. He was becoming a man.

But whilst those two were building castles in the air—castles on a hill that had once moved and might do so again—the controversy over that same Holy Mountain grew daily more uproarious. That it should be used for pleasure, low, common people's pleasure, roused the influential supporters of the Permanent Committee to hysterical indignation. At first this found vent in those newspapers, mostly religious, certainly few and unimportant, which were beyond the control of the Director of the *Halfpenny Press*. Then the *Penny Press*, out-voting Sir Pushcott's interest in its management in a vain hope of increasing its circulation, joined in the howl. Platitudes, nicely reconcocted for its readers, flew about like starlings over stubble. Indignation meetings were organised. Government interference was demanded. The King and Lords were petitioned. A reaction was forecasted. Those who had never supported the religious work of the Permanent Committee, now found themselves more than able, more than willing, to fight (vocally) under the banner of religion ; to write, to speak, to denounce and to consign their fellow men to Hell, presumably as luggage in advance. The semi-intelligent, only capable of taking sides, divided themselves up into Trotmanites and Anti-Trotmanites. " Antichrist is come ! " said one side, while the others repeated like parrots, " Business is business ! Progress must not be stayed ! "

Alec was scarcely disturbed at all.

Finally, a syndicate of wealthy men, real and bogus philanthropists, issued an opposition halfpenny newspaper which, for the good of the cause, declined to make a profit. Sir Pushcott was compelled to look about him. By some clever manipulations on the Stock Exchange, and in virtue of some knighthoods procured by his influence with the Government, he brought the philanthropists to see the expediency, the true morality, of compromise. *Daily Tidings* came, after much earnest thought and

so forth, to the conclusion that the Pro Bono Publico Syndicate, under strict inspection, should be given a trial. A committee of very titled and excessively influential men and women was formed to investigate and to advise. The Pro Bono Publico Syndicate solemnly promised to be educational. The *Halfpenny Press* interviewed several doctors on the subject, *Sane Amusement a Safeguard of National Health.* Insanity, they all agreed, was frequently the result of a dull life ; and possibly cancer too ; for, as they pointed out, old maids and pensioners are peculiarly liable to cancer. The compromise was much applauded. It was found to be in accordance with the inborn sense of justice of the British race.

Julia developed a fixed dislike to the Holy Mountain and everything concerning it. Whenever—and it was often enough —Mr. Trotman laid down the law about it, she became grimly silent and bit her lips into chaps. When Alec tried to impress upon her that their marriage and all their fortunes depended entirely on the Holy Mountain, she appeared quite unable to understand even his simple arguments. By letting him see how unhappy it made her, she effectively, if not openly, forbade him to talk about it. Once or twice they had words.

The Pro Bono Publico Syndicate arranged to open the Holy Mountain on Whit Monday. On that bank holiday also, Alexander Trotman, Mayor of Trowbury, and Julia Mary Jepp were duly married at the Parish Church, amid a confusion of cabs, cakes, clergy, speeches, relatives, reporters, congratulations, sightseers, and luggage. There is little need to describe the ceremony. Julia did not weep. It was like any other marriage in a country town, only more so.

Neither is there any need to describe the happiness of the bridal pair. It was at once too much described and too great for description, and it was tainted with an elusive apprehension of no one knew what. Alec felt . . . But Alec was ever incapable of realising his feelings.

In the words of the *Trowbury Guardian :* "The Happy Couple left by the afternoon express for the mansion in London kindly lent them by Sir Pushcott Bingley."

XI

With Alec and Julia, as with so many young married couples from the country, the wonder of London, seen under such special conditions, did but add itself to the wonder of being married and confirm the ceremonial breakage of a new life from

the old. Though Julia, at all events, knew only too much of the modern yokel's Mecca, everything seemed continuously new to both of them. They basked in the winks of guards and porters ; nor did Julia feel herself insulted this time, for was not their position above-board now, and highly respectable ?

Mrs. Maclean, the housekeeper of Sir Pushcott Bingley's bachelor-house, as he had called it in writing to Alec, received them with kindly curiosity. Sir Pushcott, she said, with an elderly servant's pleasure in the smallest doings of "the family," would not obtrude that day. Meanwhile, they were to be sure the house was theirs, though it was not nearly so fine as the house in Park Lane or as Lady Bingley's flat in Kensington. Dinner was timed for eight o'clock. Would that suit them ?

It was all delightful. They dined together on many courses. Strangely delightful ! They felt, for the time being, master and mistress of the world. They experienced to the full that silent, widespread conspiracy which is always operating to marry and give in marriage.

Not that they minded. How nice, how much younger, Julia looked ! And how much handsomer Alec had become ! They were each other's.

One cloud there was. No need to inquire too closely into it. Call it coyness on Julia's part. She desired to go somewhere, to see something, that evening. Alec desired to stay at home till bedtime. Julia took feminine steps to get her own way ; so that when Mrs. Maclean appeared at the end of dinner to gaze on the newly-married couple and to excuse her fluttering round by asking if they knew London, Julia said that she did know London, that her husband did not know it at all well, and that they proposed going somewhere that very evening.

On hearing from the housekeeper that Sir Pushcott had ordered them to have the use of a motor-brougham, Alec gave way.

Where should they go ?

Mrs. Maclean was ready with a suggestion. The Holy Mountain was, of course, what they ought to go and see—its opening day too. She would ring up the garage and have the motor-brougham round.

Julia's face fell. "I didn't want to think about that to-day," she whispered while the housekeeper was at the telephone.

Alec, however, newly-made possessor of Julia, was beginning to think himself a personage. Thoughts struck him very forcibly : "I am the owner of the Holy Mountain. It has been opened to-day. I moved it. It's mine. We ought to go and see it."

He knew also that he would be of consequence there, and, after receiving so much attention, he lusted for more. He acted decisively, not waiting to argue or discuss. " Which way do we get there ? " he asked.

Mrs. Maclean decided that they ought to go up Oxford Street and past the Park—quite near Sir Pushcott's other house—and along the Uxbridge Road. Her philosophy of honeymooning was : " Keep them on the move, or else they'll be sure to have tiffs." She had detected that this couple was not in complete agreement over some matter or other, and therefore she hastened the more to bustle them off.

Julia, anxious to go out for her own reasons, was not unattracted by the notion of driving in a private motor through some of the great streets where aforetime she had walked or had driven on a 'bus. She made her husband's eagerness hers. She put herself into his hands with an almost pathetic renunciation of her customary motherliness. But she had her apprehensions all the same, and on being tucked into the comfortable brougham a kind of weariness came over her. She lost sight, as it were, of the future. It became foggy, dark, uncertain, and consequently to be feared.

She could have said, " I told you so ! " when, at the Marble Arch, something went wrong with the machinery and they had to back, not without risk, into a side-street.

They were tired, both of them, and after taking a more or less fictitious interest in the repairs and the traffic, they sat back on the cushions and nearly fell asleep on one another's shoulders—till Julia saw a man look in at the window and grin, grin unpleasantly. Thereafter she sat bolt upright.

It was late by the time they had worked themselves through the traffic into the neighbourhood of Acton. Still more tired they were now ; so tired that the lights, the people, and the noise seemed part of a dream.

Suddenly Alec nudged Julia :

" I say ! What's that ? "

Through the hazy air they saw before them, over the housetops, what looked like a huge mound of dull flame. And, as soon as their attention was fixed upon it, they heard snatches of giddy music with an undertone of voices—the peculiar deep, uncanny roar of many people shouting, talking, and laughing in the distance.

" That must be the Holy Mountain," Julia replied.

" No ! Really ? "

" Yes. That's it."

"I say, it's fine. Isn't it?"

Julia stared at it dully. Then she said in a resigned voice: "Yes. I suppose it is. It *is* fine. Lovely!—Alec, I wish we weren't going there."

"We must go on now we've started."

Alec was beginning to excite himself. The blaze of light acted upon him like the noise—also called *blaze*—of trumpets. His lethargy drew off. "Fine!" he exclaimed. "Fine! And it's all ours, Julie."

"And Sir Pushcott Bingley's, Alec. It's not really ours. If 'twas. . . ."

"But it *is!* I moved it, didn't I?"

Julia raised herself to face him.

"*Did* you?" she said with great emphasis.

"Well, I s'pose I did. It moved when I wanted it to, anyhow. Don't you remember? It moved just as I was kissing you—just then."

"Yes, just as you were kissing me. . . ."

"I believe 'twas the kiss did it," Alec added, with affectionate inconsequence.

"No, Alec. You prayed, didn't you?"

"I *did* pray, Julia; and I *did* kiss you too.—Julie?"

"Yes?"

"I think 'twas loving you sort o' made me pray properly. 'Twas loving you did it. When you love anybody, you can sort of . . . You're . . . You know what I mean. . . ."

The brougham stopped in a press of traffic returning to town from Acton. They were nearer the Holy Mountain, and through a gap they could see how the light on the slopes cast itself upwards in great beams, as well as downwards on the crowd of people, and illuminated the shoddy architecture, the ostentatious columns and cornices of the Imperial Temple, renamed the Imperial Hall of Music, but still popularly called the Temple. Two searchlights swept the sky. Alec and Julia saw people on the flat roof, and made out black-and-white waiters moving about among the potted bushes and the strings of electric glow-lamps. There are certain lights and conditions of atmosphere which make the ugliest work of man into a thing of surpassing beauty. Those were the conditions that night. The Holy Mountain and the Temple with its beer-garden roof seemed like some misty loveliness brought from another world, from the world mankind desires.

"I say, Julie! I say! Look!"

Alec sat nearer to her and kept up a series of astonished

exclamations, which fell upon her ear as if they had been emitted from a piece of speaking machinery.

The brougham moved on a few yards, into a space crowded with vehicles and noisy beyond the ear's capacity. Underneath a bright canopy on which was picked out in coloured lamps the words—

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

Alec and Julia saw a long row of turnstiles, and a large notice, *No change here. Admission One Shilling.* The turnstiles made an insufferable clicking noise, though few were entering through them.

From another row of turnstiles a short distance away a seemingly endless crowd was flowing irregularly in spurts. Cab-whistles and the rattle of motor-'buses seemed almost one with the stink of petrol.

Like many provincials when confused by the noise of great cities, Julia's thoughts turned back to the country. It flashed into her mind—the calm, open Downs and the fresh wind upon them. And following that vision, came the horror of the moving of the Holy Mountain. She felt inclined to tears; sad and hemmed in. She would have turned home even then, but that evening Alec had taken the lead. He steered her to a turnstile. The excitement and responsibility combined had wrought him up to something of the alertness of a city-born man.

"Late sir, isn't it?" said the gatekeeper who took their money.

"All right," Alec replied. "We want to have a look at it."

"Well, you've never seen the like, and that's a fact. My hands is stiff and black with silver."

Within the turnstiles, Alec and Julia saw a broad avenue leading straight up to the Temple. On either side were trees in boxes, tiers of lights. Few people were near them. Julia noticed that the audience from the Hall of Music were descending the Holy Mountain by another avenue which led directly from the Temple to the exit turnstiles. The bold, stodgy strains of *God Save the King* forced their way down to her.

A man wearing a top-hat on which the electric arc lights shone, was walking down the avenue. Julia saw a woman, unmistakably dressed, dart out from the shelter of one of the bushes, go up to him and pluck his arm. He shook her off violently with gestures of disgust, calling her courtesan in rough language; and, reeling to the other side of the avenue, she fell against a lamp-post.

"Why, it's Edie Starkey!—Edie!" cried Julia.

"Now you know how I get my living, Julia Jepp. None of your draper's shops for me!"

Edith Starkey ran away up the slope.

Alec pulled Julia away. She had burst into tears and was clinging to his arm. "Oh, I *hate* this place!" she wailed.

Alec stayed about with her for some time, until she was calmer; and then he started again for the Temple. An impulse, his embarrassment even, compelled him to go ahead.

They came to the main entrance of the Temple. The *God Save the King* had ceased. "Can't go in now. All over!" said a commissionaire who had *Holy Mountain* broidered in gold on his peaked cap.

"I want to go to the top."

"It's too late, sir. All over now."

"I *shall* go. It's my place."

"Eh, what?"

"I'm Alexander Trotman."

"What?"

"I'm Alexander Trotman, I tell you, and I want to go to the top."

The commissionaire looked at him closely. "The devil you are!—Beg pardon, sir," he said. "I'll take your card up to the manager, sir."

Alec gave him one of the new visiting-cards his mother had had printed.

"If you'll be good enough to wait a moment in the vestibule, sir. . . ."

The swallow-tailed manager came to them. He was obsequiously polite, examining Alec intently all the while. "We didn't expect you or we should have been ready. Sir Pushcott said you were probably coming to-morrow with him. If you had let us know—a proper reception—you will excuse. . . ."

"I want to go on the top, on the roof," Alec interrupted irritably.

Was it not *his* Holy Mountain?

"We've had it cleared; had to do it a minute or two ago. A young woman—h'm! ah!—took her life by jumping off the parapet. We will have the place wired in to-morrow."

Julia shuddered on Alec's arm. "Was it Edie Starkey?" she whispered. "No! Don't ask. I don't want to know. I'm sure 'twas. Poor Edie. . . ."

The manager was taking them into the lift. They clung together when it started with a jolt. "Can I send you up

anything ?" he asked, with his eye on Julia. "A drop of brandy ?"

"Yes."

"No !" said Julia.

"No, thank you," said Alec. "Leave us alone, please. All right in the fresh air."

After hovering about them for a short time, the manager went below, and they were left alone on the roof.

Alec led Julia to a seat near the edge of the beer-garden. She burst into weeping. "Alec, it's wicked. It's wicked, wicked ! I'm sure 'twas poor Edie Starkey. Oh, I hate, I loathe this place ! It's brought her to this and killed her. I wish it was back in Wiltshire again. It all began with this."

Alec argued, quite uselessly of course. Julia blamed the Holy Mountain for everything. He tried to distract her by pointing over the London which lay beneath them, a sea of blackness, spotted with lights, and high buildings, and towers like the masts and shroudings of vessels in a harbour. London looked up ; the heavens down. Julia and Alec were suspended, as it were, between the living city and the still, yet not inanimate, sky. The night wind was gentle with them, the noise far off.

Julia was seized with a fit of weeping more violent than before. "It's wicked, Alec. Oh, how I wish you'd never moved it ! Move it back. Think of poor Edie, broken to bits, all squashed, dead, on the pavement below. I can see her. I can see her. Look ! there they are, carrying her down the slope, there—can't you see ?—like a cockroach crawling ! Move it back, Alec. Alec !"

"How can I ?"

"You can !"

"I can't, dear. I can't move another mountain."

"*If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed. . . .*"

"'Twasn't that, Julie. Julie dear, stop crying. Do ! You'll be ill. You'll shake yourself to bits."

Julia pulled herself together. Alec's words in the brougham came back to her mind, echoed in her ear : *I think 'twas loving you sort o' made me pray properly. 'Twas loving you did it.* She had the secret. Her mind worked with effortless rapidity. Delilah revived in her. She took up all her sex's weapons—to battle with such a Samson !

"Allie dear, for my sake. . . ."

She wound herself about him, body, mind, and soul. She felt him beginning to give way. She kissed him ; maddened him ; implored him. She dragged him to the level of her own

despairing ecstasy. Body, mind, and soul she dragged, each in its own way.

"Allie! You love me. Alec! For my sake. . . . Put an end to it all. If you love me, you can. I know it. *You* know it. It's faith *and* love, Alec. If you had faith—a little, little faith. . . . Alec! My love! You *can* do it.—For my sake—Alec—dear! You will. *You will!* Alec. . . ."

XII

Hereunder are the headlines of the *Halfpenny Press* :—

APPALLING CATASTROPHE

HOLY MOUNTAIN GONE

TROTMAN'S TREACHERY

TROTMAN'S END

PERISHES WITH NEWLY-WED WIFE

UNPARALLELED OCCURRENCE

INTERVIEW WITH SORROWING FATHER

THE MOTHER'S SANITY

LEADING OPINIONS

THE NEWS AT THE STOCK EXCHANGE

(*Copyright*)

THE END

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE—Splendid Isolations; Drama, Fine Arts, and Music; "The Hush in Europe," by* H. N. BRAILSFORD; *The Significance of the Budget, by* J. A. HOBSON; *Le Roman Français Contemporain, by* CAMILLE MAUCLAIR; *Communication, by* R. D. H.; *Review, by* D. G.

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

Splendid Isolations

SINCE we always awake on the day after the fair, it was high time that somebody should awaken us to the dismal position we have been reduced to in our foreign contacts. And the something that surely should awaken us is the visit of the Tsar to the German Emperor. For this is a visit of a weak man seeking help far more than the meeting of two equal potentates. It is customary to set down these comings-together of princes as of no political importance, but as a matter of fact the tendency of the day is to make them more and more weighty as they grow more and more frequent. Facilities of access have affected kings as they have affected poorer people. And whereas before the days of railroads and steamboats the progress of two monarchs across the world to meet upon a field of cloth-of-gold was the sign of amity more formal and more public, it meant rather the coming together of great shoals of attendant diplomatists who would be perfectly content to wrangle for infinite spaces of time, than any personal intention on the part of the monarchs to get anything definite settled.

NOWADAYS, however, the drawing together, side by side, of two royal steam yachts in the waters of a tranquil estuary may be a thing infinitely more significant than the meeting of any Henry or of any Francis. And the meeting of the Tsar and of William II. signifies the final breakdown of British foreign policy, which for long has seemed so successful. For many years now the vortex of European international foreign politics has centred itself round the attempts of Prussia and Great Britain to isolate each other, each seeking to group into an alliance of its own all the great Powers other than its rival. By taking advantage of the moral horror felt by all Europe on the occasion of the Boer War, Germany had at the end of that struggle succeeded in taking a virtual hegemony of all the Powers

against this country. A year, or say even six months ago, we appeared to have reduced Prussia to a state of absolute and final isolation. To-day our situation is as bad—nay, it is even worse than it was towards the close of the Boer War.

It is even worse, because it is impossible any longer not to see that with Austria actively arrayed against us and possessing a strong fleet, with Italy effectively a party to the Austro-Prussian Alliance and possessing also a strong fleet, we are paralysed as far as any naval activity goes in the Mediterranean and the security of our road to India is at an end. In Persia we have been—as we always have been—"jockeyed" by Russia; in Turkey, by our dread of taking any definite stand, we have left the Empire open to dismemberment by Prussia and to Prussian penetration by way of Bagdad as far as the Persian Gulf.

And this sudden and disastrous deterioration seems to date from the coming into power at the Foreign Office of one particular man. It is an excellent tradition of British politics that, during any crisis, or any war, foreign matters are considered to be lifted outside the realm of party criticism. But the war being over or the crisis ended, this truce of Heaven comes to an end; we may reasonably judge results, though it would have been unreasonable to disturb the policy-maker at his work. And, indeed, the tradition that party politicians should be silent as to foreign matters becomes vicious when it is translated into a silence as to Foreign Ministers.

Sir Edward Grey has been for much too long a sacrosanct figure. We have been expected, it has been enjoined upon us, to be as silent about him as in polite society we are silent as to matters of sex, the Deity, the hungry poor, or other awful things. And inasmuch as all that this country desires is not to be asked to think about any complicated subjects, but just to be allowed to go to sleep until the time comes to vote straight upon the party ticket, so the country has accepted, as things not to be talked about, matters of sex, the Deity, the hungry poor, and Sir Edward Grey.

THE MONTH

Sir Edward Grey, we have been taught to think, was a silent, strong man; incidentally we have been led to imply that he was in strong sympathy as a co-operator with his Majesty the King. There is a passage in one of Tolstoy's novels which represents Napoleon the Great confronted the first time with the portrait of his son, the King of Rome. It is an immortal moment, but Napoleon says nothing, and Tolstoy tells us that he says nothing because he can find nothing to say. Of such is the silence of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs—a fact of which we can feel confident when we consider the emptiness of his rare utterances. And to this silence of sterility Sir Edward Grey unites a green fear of Prussia that has made him prove false to all the traditions, not only of his country, but even of his party.

At its inception the Anglo-Russian Treaty was at least of debatable beneficence: in the hands of Sir Edward Grey it has proved a double-edged sword which has cut only our own fingers; and as a direct result of our poltroonery in the Balkan crisis we have the road to Tabriz occupied, not only by the Persian Cossacks of Colonel Liakhof, but by actual Russian troops. For the fact is that in English affairs the only things really valuable are the courage of a man's convictions, the adherence to tradition, a directness of vision, a tenacity of purpose—but, above all, courage. The employment of these attributes during the Balkan crisis would have saved our poor position. We do not know what Sir Edward Grey's convictions may be—the result of his actions would seem to prove him a Whig of the cold type that has always proved disastrous in British foreign affairs. For Liberalism to be effective there must be behind it a certain glow of humanitarian faith, a certain visionary quality, an absolute incapacity to temporise. So that when we remember the late Mr. Gladstone's splendid and rhetorical handling of the Balkan question we feel bitterly ashamed of Sir Edward Grey's.

Whether constitutional or Parliamentary Government can ever prove salutary to nations other than the British is a debatable point that we are not inclined for the moment to debate. But there can be no doubt that the whole tradition of Great Britain, since the time when the words were written, "Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints"—the whole tradition of Great Britain, wrong-headed, perhaps, since the English were

always wrong-headed, but at any rate inspired by conviction and rendered glorious and, on the whole, prosperous by its singleness of purpose—the whole tradition of British policy and of British popular fervour has been employed in favour of foreign popular causes and of foreign constitutional aspirations. We wonder if Sir Edward Grey ever remembered how Byron died at Missolonghi in the cause of Greece; how the Lambeth brewers' draymen saluted an Austrian general who had flogged women of a subject race; how the whole nation burst into frenzied acclaimings of the red shirt of Garibaldi. These enthusiasms may, in the eyes of Sir Edward Grey, have appeared wrong-headed, but it is in a sort of wrong-headed probity of conscience, it is in a sort of blind, but fine, following of a sentimental tradition, that Great Britain has always found her account.

Let us see how the following of this particular star would have helped us during the late foreign turmoil, the echoes of which are dying away, leaving us how much the poorer! There were two empires, Persia and Turkey, in which popular agitations were striving to establish constitutional Governments: our traditions should have made us espouse these causes. There were two small nations, Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were suddenly annexed by a neighbouring great Power: our traditions should have led us to espouse their cause. What happened? Sir Edward Grey fears Prussia: he thinks, apparently, of nothing else but Prussia. There was, however, an alliance with the Government of the Tsar which should have been considered. But, in his fear of Prussia, Sir Edward abandons to that country Bosnia and Herzegovina. For Bosnia and Herzegovina are the price paid by Prussia for a close and effective alliance with Austria—for the building of those Austrian *Dreadnoughts* which, whether we were at peace with Austria or no, would, in the event of war with Prussia, paralyse our Mediterranean Fleet. Prussia, that is to say, courageously took the risk of war with Great Britain, France, and Russia for the sake of a Pan-German alliance stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Sir Edward, for the fine cause of freedom, would not take the risk of a war with Prussia alone—of the war which we believe him to consider inevitable. He has delayed the war; he has abandoned the fine cause of freedom, he has jeopardised our Imperial Ideal. Prussia has now an influence extending, not from the Baltic alone, but to the Persian Gulf itself; Prussia has endangered with its Austro-Italian alliance our route to the East; Prussia has re-

established its traditional and effective alliance with the other autocracy of Russia.

For, whatever the German papers may say, the meeting of the Tsar and the Kaiser is no mere affair of a field of cloth-of-gold. It is a re-establishing of a friendship directed against democracy ; it is a weakening of the influence which we believe King Edward VII. had established temporarily over the Russian bureaucratic mind. Russia has tried us and found us wanting. Our alliance in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina availed her nothing. On the contrary, having egged her on to resist Austria we basely deserted her as soon as Prussia came to the rescue of the Dual Monarchy. As a result, Russian troops are encamped in Persia, and there is no sign of their recall.

So perishes Persian constitutionalism. Let us turn to the case of Turkey. Here again every tradition that we have would have led us to support the Young Turks. The Young Turks held out to us their hands by introducing into the Turkish Parliament a resolution terminating the contract for the Prussian State Railway to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. This concession was granted to the Emperor William II. by Abdul Hamid at the time of the Emperor's visit to Constantinople. It gives a Prussian company—nominally the Deutscher Reichsbank, but effectively the Prussian State—the right to build a railway to Bagdad, with an extension to the shores of the Persian Gulf ; to develope, to exploit, and to open up the nominally Turkish territory for ten miles on each side of the line. This, in effect, is to establish an immense strip of the Prussian Empire twenty miles wide, an immense causeway through the heart of the Middle East to India itself. For who can doubt that, taking a lesson from Great Britain herself, Prussia will very soon occupy that stretch of territory ? A few fanatical tribesmen will commit outrages against German engineers and platelayers : Prussia will demand that Turkey protect her subjects : Turkey will be powerless, Prussian troops will be poured in, and the history of Egypt will be repeated.

And who is to blame Prussia ? Certainly not we who have done the same thing so many times. But the poor, wistful Young Turks, holding out a hand for the support of Great Britain, introduced into their Parliament a Bill for terminating the German

Bagdad Railway concession. They were prepared to do it on the ground that the time for the concession was nearly expired or on the ground that it was outside the power of Abdul Hamid to impignorate Turkish territory; they were prepared to do it on any ground whatever, so long as they could be certain of the support of Great Britain. They received from our strong, silent Consul no assurance of support whatever, and so the Empire is really in danger. For any danger that we may have from the German fleet we may meet with a comparatively small expenditure of attention. But it is hopeless for us to attempt to cope with Prussia upon land. Russia is in effective occupation of Persia; Prussia has secured treaty rights to an overland route to India. Where then is the British Empire?

His Majesty the King has been called the first bagman of Europe, and, indeed, with his talents, his tact, and the consummate appreciation of personalities which he inherited, no doubt, from the late Queen, he seemed to have placed us in a position of enormous strength, in a position as nearly as possible sympathetic to the rest of the world, and in a position, moreover, in accordance with the finer traditions of British international statesmanship. All this is gone. We have proved ourselves craven, we have proved that our alliance is worthless to an ally; we have proved that now, as ever, there can be no continuity in British foreign politics; and almost for the first time we have proved that we have forgotten the fact that a dogged courage, combined with an obstinacy in the cause of what we consider freedom, is for us, *Deo adjuvante*, the only safe, the only prosperous, the only thinkable course. E. R.

THE DRAMA, FINE ARTS AND MUSIC

Mr. Shaw's Play and the Censor—The New Royalty: Mr. Arnold Bennett's *What the Public Wants*—Vaudeville: *The Chorus Girl*—The Court: The Irish National Theatre Repertory—The Coronet: Manchester Repertory Theatre—The New English Art Club—Covent Garden: *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

By the courtesy of Mr. Shaw we have been able to read the manuscript of *The Showing up of Blanco Posnet*, to which Mr. Shaw gives the sub-title of "A Sermon in Melodrama." We should ourselves have preferred to style it a "Melodrama with Digressions"—but our purpose is rather to deal with Mr. Redford than with Mr. Shaw's play. Mr. Shaw shows us a

number of incompetent gold-miners in a nearly derelict camp—prospectors, a sheriff, a prostitute, a Church elder, a jury, and so on. These people desire to hang Mr. Blanco Posnet. Mr. Posnet has stolen a horse : he gives it up to a mother who desires to carry her dying child to the nearest doctor. He is therefore overtaken by the sheriff's posse. For the sentimentality that permits him thus to put his neck in the noose he blames the Deity. But for the softening of his heart he would have escaped : it was the Deity who softened his heart : *ergo*, the Deity really got him into this scrape.

It will be observed that Mr. Posnet is not railing really against the Deity as existent in the mind of any person born since 1860. He is railing against an obsolete misconception of the Jahwê who opposed Elohim. Or really, he is railing against the luck which has set him, a sentimentalist, into what he imagines to be the hard world of Poker Flat. But Poker Flat proves just as sentimental as Mr. Posnet, whom it lets off because he was sentimental and tried to save the child at the risk of his life. And then, sentimentally, he marries the attractive Bad Woman and stands drinks round.

The moral appears to be that the "Deity" is not as black as He is painted—or that Mr. Posnet's luck, in other words, was not "so all through rocky"—and we wonder what the Censor objects to in this. Mr. Redford we know to be a representative merchant : his function is to keep off the stage Biblical references, any statement of the fact that vice is costly and dangerous. As he is a little weak in his knowledge of the Scriptures he fails sometimes in the former attempt : in the latter he is always successful. The keepers of disorderly houses should present him with an illuminated address.

This would be funny, but inasmuch as the Censor represents the head of the State it is also lamentable.* That Royal influence should be brought to bear to prevent abuse of the nominal Deity of the Established Church is a disagreeable, but a just-thinkable possibility. After all, the King in his coronation oath

* It is not as generally realised as it should be that Mr. Redford is the direct servant of the King and that, as such, he is not responsible to Parliament or to any other body.

has to swear to protect the State religion and to be unjust to another Church. But the process of dismissing Mr. Shaw's play has been merely imbecile.

Mr. Shaw's hero abuses his luck—which he chooses to call by the name of God—through the entire play: Mr. Redford desires to cut out two passages. Mr. Shaw's Bad Woman is obviously one who has been on intimate terms with every male character on the stage. Mr. Redford merely desires to erase the statement that she has had "immoral relations."

Had Mr. Redford boldly refused his license to the whole play he would have shown courage. As it is he has morally made the King ridiculous. We reproduce here his letter which amply proves our contention:—

Copy.

Lord Chamberlain's Office,
St. James's Palace, S.W.
May 20, 1909.

Dear Sir,—I beg to inform you that I am unable to recommend the License for Representation for the play in one act entitled *The Showing up of Blanco Posnet* in its present form.

I may add that I should be prepared to recommend the issue of the License subject to the omission in Representation enclosed herewith.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) G. A. Redford,
Examiner of Plays.

Acting Manager,
His Majesty's Theatre,
London.

The Showing up of Blanco Posnet.

Omit in Representation:

Page 10. He hasn't finished with you yet. He always has a trick up His sleeve.

Page 11. He's a sly one. He's a mean one. He lies low for you. He plays cat and mouse with you. He lets you run loose until you think you're shut of Him, and then when you least expect it He's got you.

From "Reverend" . . . as far as "hanging me goes."

Page 20. Sheriff, I accuse Feemy of immoral relations with Strapper.

From "I accuse the fair Euphemia" . . . as far as "because I wouldn't touch Feemy with a pair of tongs."

[Note by Mr. Bernard Shaw]. Please note that the immoral relations are described pungently again and again in the play without any protest from the Lord Chamberlain. The objection is not to the relations, but to calling them immoral!!!

Here, for instance, is a passage that Mr. Redford sanctioned. "Oh, why didn't you drink as I used to? Why didn't you drink as I was led to by the Lord for my good." And again:

"I thank God selling drink pays me. And thank God He sent me that fit as a warning that . . . He needed me for another service"—the other service being the keeping of a drinking saloon. A little later Mr. Redford censures a Biblical text. A little later he passes a speech: "He (God) done me out of it. He meant to pay off old scores . . . He means to win the deal and you can't stop Him. He made a fool of me: but He can't frighten me."

What sort of person is Mr. Redford? He will license any kind of play turning upon leering vice: he revels—as a Censor—in what silly young men call "dining with actresses": he will pass any kind of breach of the Seventh Commandment as long as the "guilty parties" escape punishment. (He licensed the *Earth* and censured *Waste*.) But if a playwright should point out that the results of "dining with actresses" are frequently ruin, disease, melancholy, decay, or disaster to one's children, at once Mr. Redford uses the censure. (He censured *Ghosts*.) But his last proceeding is surely his most silly one—his most treasonable one. For surely it is treason to make the head of the State look ridiculous. And here we have the King made to pass a play that is one long blasphemy from end to end—to offer to pass it if four passages are omitted. To make the King refuse to pass any play containing an opposition to revealed religion might be sailing dangerously near unconstitutionality: to make the King look silly and a promoter of vice is to endanger the dynasty. Does Mr. Redford remember the history of Beaumarchais?

Why is it that apparently any one-horse provincial town can do for the Drama what London has hitherto been utterly unable to effect? For indeed June seems to prove this to us. Here we have Dublin—here we have Manchester, each of them sending us a Repertory Theatre with plays which, if they cannot all be called masterpieces, do at least convey to us a feeling of freshness, of originality, and of having been written by people with hearts, livers and the proper vitality of man. Apart from these, to the person seeking entertainment, instruction or emotion in the Drama, London has seemed to be the usual dreary wilderness. For to go more than sixteen times to *What Every Woman Knows* is, as it were, to put too many eggs into one basket. Besides at the Duke of York's the cast is beginning to show the wear and tear of a long run, the actors speaking negligently, as if they thought the audience must already know their speeches by heart,

and seeming to attempt to atone for this lassitude by a rather unreasonable over-acting. In addition to this, London has offered us Mr. Arnold Bennett's *What the Public Wants*, as produced by Mr. Charles Hawtrey. It is not very often that we should be inclined to rate Mr. Charles Hawtrey above Mr. Hearn, who in the Stage Society's production played the part of Sir Charles Worgan. But by making the halfpenny newspaper proprietor an impressive figure with a magnetic personality, Mr. Hearn fell into a mistake and erred on the side of the obvious. For a moment's reflection ought to be sufficient to let an intelligent man see that such a newspaper proprietor, presiding as he does over papers written by errand boys, for errand boys, must himself be neither more nor less than just an errand boy, grown prosperous. If he had about him anything magnetic, his papers must have some quality, some personality, some force, and this would disgust the public. And, in presenting Sir Charles Worgan as a merely blatant, grown up and prosperous errand boy, absolutely irresponsible as boys are, absolutely unthinking as boys are, with his vulgar accent, his vulgar voice, his vulgar lisp, Mr. Hawtrey hit the character to the life. Indeed, but for the fact that Miss Margaret Halstan was if possible a little more tedious at the New Royalty than in the original production, and that the gentleman who represented Sir Charles Worgan's brother over-acted as intolerably as, let us say, Sir Beerbohm Tree in his wildest moments, Mr. Hawtrey's version was really preferable to the Stage Society's, and we owe him in addition a real debt of gratitude for his courage in putting the play on at all.

But why is it that these provincial places send us plays with vitality and actors who don't inevitably and wearisomely over-act? America, that one vast "provinces," has not during this month succeeded in sending us a vital play. *The Chorus Lady* is atrocious, but Miss Rose Stahl is adorable. She is adorable not as, let us say, Miss Pauline Chase is adorable, but more in the manner of Miss Genée. And the first two acts of *The Chorus Lady* are just bearable, and Miss Stahl so makes us forget our critical faculties that the production may be said to be well worth seeing.

The Irish National Theatre has brought us:

Dervorgilla
The Workhouse Ward } by Lady Gregory.
Hyacinth Halvey

An Imaginary Conversation, *Time* } by Norreys Connell.

The Playboy of the Western World, *The Well of the Saints*, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, *Riders to the Sea* } by J. M. Synge.

Kathleen ni Houlihan, *Deirdre* } by W. B. Yeats.

The Manchester Repertory Theatre has brought to London Hermann Sudermann's *Das Glück im Winkel*, Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Widowers' Houses*, Mr. Edward Garnett's *The Feud*, Mr. Galsworthy's *Silver Box*, and we ask ourselves, we rub our eyes and ask ourselves with wonder, what London has done—what London, which could not support the Vedrenne-Barker Company, has done to deserve these blessed visitors.

Seen on the stage, the late Mr. J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, which Mr. Norreys Connell has rendered in a semi-serious vein as distinct from Mr. Fay's entirely tragical production, confirms us in the idea that it is one of the finest of modern plays. Mr. Fred O'Donovan, who played Christopher Malion's part, is a fine actor. The *Well of the Saints* is not so interesting a play, but still it has great originality of method and is full of Irish wit—even the London critics are unable to say that it is not strong, not amusing, nor wanting in love interest. There are all these qualities. Of Lady Gregory's plays we liked *The Workhouse Ward*. It was a real exposition of the querulousness of old age rendered in an amusing and touching way, a product of that tender irony, of that make-the-best-of-it pessimism which makes Ireland our eternal problem.

In a more commonplace way the repertory at the Coronet Theatre was in one sense more excellent than that at the Court. The plays it produced were less fresh and less exotic. On the other hand they were, except in one instance, more masterly. *Widowers' Houses*, *The Silver Box*, and *Das Glück im Winkel* must be familiar to our readers, but Mr. Edward Garnett's play *The Feud*, which was produced for the first time in London, deals with an Icelandic family in the twelfth century. It was therefore exotic enough and pleasantly fresh. The

handling however—at any rate in the first two acts—could not be called masterly. For it was impossible to understand the relationships of any of the characters : and too much time was spent in attempting to get local colour, though the local colour itself was excellently rendered by the charming *mise-en-scène* and the really beautiful dresses. On the other hand, the last two acts, and more particularly the third, were extremely poignant, and probably realised all their author's intention.

The reader familiar with the vicissitudes of the Drama will realise how much of praise this is, and how much of promise this implies. For the ordinary dramatist can usually give us a good first act, failing lamentably in those that succeed. If Mr. Garnett would pay some attention to the first two acts of *The Feud*, excising certain passages of non-significant comedy and making plain that the play is concerned with two families, one at feud with the other, this play should be one that should last a long time.

Meanwhile we congratulate London on the fact that out of its seven million inhabitants it has been able to find a sufficiency of people fairly well to fill the Coronet and to prolong the run of the Irish Company at the Court. We presume it is because no favourite actor-manager's wife is concerned in either of these companies that the London dramatic critics have paid so little attention to these productions.

The Exhibition in Suffolk Street comes as a surprise because of the abnormal proportion of excellent work collected together. We see here that English Art is emerging from the chaos produced by the revulsion from the Victorian School. Among the artists exhibiting may be mentioned Mr. McEvoy, Mr. A. E. John, Mr Orpen, Mr. Rothenstein, Mr. John S. Sargent, Mr. William McTaggert, &c. *Consider the Lilies* (motion under cool sunlight) renders very cleverly that particular kind of atmosphere. We quite felt it was a cool day and we quite felt the children dancing in consequence. The lilies and the whole made a quaint sequence in colour scheme and thought. The portrait of the Rt. Hon. Charles Booth by Mr. W. Rothenstein is a fine piece of work, but so sure in the draughtsmanship that the hardness of outline is slightly cruel. The *Way Down to the Sea*, by Mr. A. E. John is too cursory, too much merely a fresco, and at that not a pleasant one, but his portrait of Mr. William Nicholson gives a very

different impression of his work. In short, the New English Art Club is doing for the Art of painting in London what—we can never be sufficiently thankful for it—Miss Horniman's enterprise has done so delightfully for the Drama in England.

L.

In view of the Exhibition of Works by Ford Madox Brown at the Leicester Galleries, we print below what may be called his comparatively unfamiliar but relatively important painter's profession of faith. It forms part of Madox Brown's address to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge on the occasion of his standing for the Slade Professorship in 1873, and it describes the course of lectures which he would have desired to deliver. Mr. Sydney Colvin, however, was the successful candidate.

. . . But here I would fain abandon generalities, for the consideration of how facts and theories could best be dealt with in a series of Lectures such as the ordinary student could be supposed to find time for. A synopsis in chronological order of all that is known of the subject from earliest times might be the simplest, but it is by no means clear that it would be the most effective plan. I should rather incline to one which would place the beginning near the middle; or rather a sort of *perspective* middle, such as gives preponderance to a very small space in the foreground, over miles of background fading away into distance.* I should wish the course to begin 150 years ago, with the revival of painting by William Hogarth, reinforced by Reynolds and Gainsborough; and however startling such proposition, or unusual such phraseology may appear, it would be easy, by means of a table of dates, and the comparison of a few facts, to justify them.

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* Synopsis of a course of Eighteen Lectures for the Slade Professorship.

1. The Revival of Painting in the 18th century, by Hogarth. Also about Reynolds, Gainsborough, &c.
2. The Revival of Painting in Flanders and Spain in the 17th century. Italian realistic Art. French Art.
3. English Modern Art.
4. French and Belgian Modern Art.
5. German and Scandinavian Modern Art.
6. Mediæval, Early German, French, Italian, and English Art; how sprung from Byzantine Art.
7. Italian Art, to the beginning of the 16th century.
8. Greek Art.
9. Giorgione, Titian, Leonardo, Raphaelle, Correggio, Michael Angelo, &c.
10. Egyptian, Asiatic, Greek, Byzantine, and Gothic Architecture.
11. Renaissance, pseudo-Greek, and English 19th century Gothic.
12. Ornamental Art.
13. Technical: Anatomy, Perspective, &c.
14. Technical: Colour, Form, Composition, Draperies, &c.
15. Sculpture.
16. Masters and Master Pieces.
17. The Future of Art.
18. Review of the whole Course of Lectures.

With the art of all Europe reduced to the flattest of school respectability—with no one rival in all Spain, Holland, France or Italy to be (with the exception of Greuze) put in the scale with him—Hogarth, without a predecessor in England, and with scarce a contemporary on the continent, stands forth in proud and solitary pre-eminence, the father of modern art, and not so much so from the mere fact of there being no other great genius in Painting extant, as from the new phase into which art from that time forth entered. For with his inexhaustible ideas—painter's ideas, which are in their nature entirely apart from literary inventions,—his boundless range of dramatic expression, his never surpassed facility of execution, he seemed the founder of new kingdoms for his heirs to reign over, and a new vista of pictorial possibilities was displayed in front of him, and when later the two great English face-painters came to his support, the three formed a tripod on which England's and a new generation's art rested. Beauty and Fancy returned to their no longer neglected sister art, and the world sunned itself in their smiles. The seventeenth century schools in Holland and Spain being again extinct, and Greuze, the charming portrayer of the one sweet face, leaving no school behind him (if even his faint tawdriness and conventionalities could be forgiven him), France and Europe lapsed again into obscurity and grossness, for a stern and martial *réveille* to overtake them in David. But the key-note of modern painting had already been struck in the far distance of the seventeenth century, with the realistic styles of Veronese, Rubens, Velasquez and Rembrandt; silenced for a time, it was caught up by the English school—a genius-haunted band, with Flaxman, and Stothard, and Constable, and Blake and Crome—hurrying on, oft stumbling and catching in their art-trappings, and clashing for a while with the usurping Davidians, it half mingles with them, half jostles them, founds, through Constable, a school of landscape in France, and exists in and with modern art—all but in Germany; too far off to have caught up the tone, she has founded a school of her own, hovering between poetry and pedantry—strongly defined and outlined poets' ideas clothed in schoolmen's gowns, transparent with age and colourless. English art has already snatched from the Teutons all she requires and more,* but her sister sleeps incredulous—or from Antwerp or Paris seeks tardy assistance. Great otherwise, in idea-range, and first both for contour and design, and earliest (ourselves not excepted) to do honour to Hogarth, and with at least one beauty-moved votary, the sculptor Rauch! But Paris, London and Antwerp form a triumvirate that brooks no other claims to the empire of art. Such might be the incomplete skeleton of what might be given on the subject of Modern Art, occupying the first five lectures.

The ear of the class once gained, the moment would be favourable for stating the claims of Mediæval Schools, where they sit, canopied with gold, and raimented as with angels' wings—perfect in tint and hue, and purest, yet intensest in expression. Giottos and Orcagnas—spirits as of grown men striving with swathing bands and bursting them.

Then the theme might necessitate a recoil of almost 2000 years, upon Greek Art, with its strength as of Demi-Gods—needing not exaggeration or tumultuous up-heavings of energy; with health for beauty, and a regulated skill never before or since attained to, fitting preparation of the mind for the contemplation of the trio of laurel-bearers of the Renaissance, Leonardo, Raphael, and Buonarotti. Contemners of the simple faith of their fathers, these again set "Strength" and "Physical Beauty" on the throne of art, and welcomed the Pagan Gods. The first, many-hued in mind as the chameleon of the fable, and great in all his phantasies—painter, poet, sculptor, musician, courtier, and pioneer of science, by turns—seldom painting, never idling, too beautiful to be long spared from a court's festivities. The second, not a courtier among princes, but a prince among courtiers—supreme—in all things

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* Dyce and Maclise.

successful—worshipped ; ever toiling, filling the world with his works and his fame, living out a long life in a short space—hushed to sleep by his guardian genius ! The third, from youth to age a giant among common men, walking apart, working apart, taciturn—brooding great thoughts, not small successes—drawing divinity out of stones, or stamping it on the damned ! Indefatigable, and great in age as in all things, and, with hands too enfeebled to hold the pencil, rearing huge temples ! Out-living whole generations of his pupils, and leaving behind him a cloak too heavy and vast for the perplexed executors of his genius.

The historic side of human-impressed Art done with, Architecture and the arts uninformed of human passions would escort us on a panoramic journey past the silent lessons of the Sphinxes and the problems of Egyptian masonry, away to the magic East, and the tile-walled pagodas, and the temples, rock-scooped and granite-carved, gilded prisons of queens, citadels of cruelty, disguised with subtlest craft of ornament—secret—inscrutable, dateless ; thence back past the ruins of temples built for free-men,—moderate, severe, but enriched with beauty and gems of art, more imperishable than gold—and the ruins of palaces built by the same free-men's sons for tyrants ; and the Byzantine Basilica, and the Norman fort, and the Cathedrals of the middle ages, and Renaissance dug to light in fragments from antiquity, and pseudo-Greek art, and home to England and English early art—not revived—rather reappearing as the gold hills dip down under the sea to re-emerge thousands of miles off ; the world's admiration ! nor should be forgotten, as too often forgotten now, ornamental art, shuddering in bondage to mechanical neatness, and the question why while it flourishes amid those lowest in the ethnological scale, it fails and pales before the ethics of civilisation.

At this stage of the lectures, the Technicals of Art might be introduced—the different modes of study, the rules of composition in painting, sculpture and architecture, the characteristics of architectonic art, the value of anatomy, perspective, and the study of costume in painting, the examination of form as beauty in men and animals, the eulogium of Colour and other topics, would bring us to the close of the fourteenth discourse.

The remaining four lectures—supposing the set to consist of eighteen, to be given twice in three years—might be reserved for subjects of the highest interest : sculpture, master-pieces in art, philosophic considerations, and lastly, counterbalancing the want of an introductory discourse, a review of the whole matter given . . .

An inevitable disadvantage attended the production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Covent Garden : on the other hand, for an entirely deplorable reason, the interest of the opera was greatly increased. Debussy's music is essentially tenuous and elusive in quality, and in the effort of making it fill the large spaces of the opera house some of its charming subtlety was almost lost. But it was heard to a splendid advantage beside the tedious inanities of Rossini and Bellini, beside the pretentiousness of the Italian pocket-Wagner, who seems to have an inexhaustible vogue in this country. We had to wait hardly at all for the production here of *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*. We have had to wait seven years for *Pélleas et Mélisande*. Let us hope that Debussy is the thin edge of a wedge which will soon move this inordinately conservative syndicate. And yet it is not for what is merely

new that we ask, but for *the best.* Why should *Sonambula* be dragged from its grave and *Fidelio* be treated as if it were dead? It is a question to which a civil answer is impossible.

What has happened to nearly every great composer in his own day is happening now to Debussy. His music is the subject of a storm of controversy. Much has been written for and against the new system of tonality that he has evolved; the technics of his music are indeed a veritable battleground of clashing opinions. *Pelléas et Mélisande* is an excellent example of his methods. In it are to be found the complex, original harmonics and the unusual combinations of chords. Still more interesting is the use he has made of the old modes of the Church. And the result of this blending of what is quite new with what is very old is exceedingly fascinating. The second scene of the first act, when Genviève reads Golaud's letter to Arkël, is almost entirely chanted; indeed all Arkël's music is a variation of plain song, and the result is curiously appropriate and impressive. This second scene is very beautiful, a refreshing contrast to the Italian warblings of which we are having so much this season.

And taken as a whole, what are the most salient points of Debussy's opera? In the first place there is its striking originality. Since Wagner, entire originality has seemed almost impossible. We are flooded at the present moment by the Italian modifications of him and by the German exaggerations. *Pelléas et Mélisande* is entirely un-Wagnerian. There is in the music a tenuous subtlety and a simplicity—an economy of means to produce effect—which is opposed to the methods of Wagner. Again, the voice is not allowed to sink in the storm of the orchestra, as it often is in the music of the Bayreuth master; nor could we discover any decided leading motives. The second point which impressed us was the wonderful way in which a background is made of purely atmospheric effects. The music of the second scene of the first act is austere, almost stately: we are in the old castle with Arkël. In the third scene of the first act, Genviève and Mélisande are outside the castle; Pelléas joins them. In the music we feel the nearness of the sea and the mists; through the music the dusk of the mysterious garden creeps over us; and we know from it that Destiny is at work, unrealised by Golaud and Pelléas, but felt vaguely, unwittingly, by Mélisande. "Ah, pourquoi partez-vous?" she chants slowly as the curtain descends. Again, in the scene by the Fontaine des Aveugles, and in the first scene by one of the castle towers, the music is

for the most part full of the joy of nature. The feeling of spring literally pulsates through it. In a word, we get atmospheric effects which, in the play, can only be suggested by stage directions and by the comments of the characters themselves. In the music these effects are made a background for the human symbols, which continually shifts and changes, sometimes merging almost into their emotions as if in sympathy with them, at other times throwing them into strong relief. Golaud particularly is always thrown into sharp contrast. Before him nature seems to withdraw and the man emerges in the music, full of personality and self. But he remains and always must remain *a symbol*.

With Arkël and Mélisande the nature music is always present; and with Arkël comes, too, the atmosphere of the old castle.

And thus Maeterlinck's play has been perfectly served by Debussy's music. Some one has remarked of Maeterlinck's characters that it is not what is said by them which matters but what is left unsaid. Debussy takes us further into the region of the actually unexpressed but suggested, showing us more clearly the things which are behind words. It is a case of complete agreement between the drama and the music. Maeterlinck's characters are difficult to play and Debussy's music is certainly difficult to sing. But with one exception the interpretation was excellent. M. Marcoux as Arkël was especially good. Although as Golaud M. Bourbon achieved a popular success we cannot praise him, in spite even of his fine voice and dramatic instinct and the obvious sincerity with which he played. For some reason, in his hands, Golaud ceased to be a symbol. He became a *person*, very human, very actual, very much alive. We felt we might have met him at dinner any evening, might furtively have watched his ill-concealed uneasiness as some one monopolised his pretty wife. In fact he was the personification of a jealous uxorious Gaul of to-day, and not at all Golaud of Allemonde.

Pelléas et Mélisande shows Debussy as a musician of serious aim. Its music is a protest against the highly coloured noise which characterises many of the modern operas beloved by the supporters of the syndicate. It is not passionate or even sensuous; its appeal is to the finer, more subtle and more enduring instincts of the listener. The superficial will always find it

monotonous and toneless compared to the garish music which easily pleases them. Yet, in reality, less monotonous music has seldom been written.

In this year of grace 1909 (which has seen the revival of *Sonambula*) we have at least one thing for which we can be grateful to the syndicate—the production of *Pellêas et Mélisande*. When shall we get *Elektra* and *Ariane et Barbe Bleue?*

B.

"The Hush in Europe"

By H. N. Brailsford

An historian eager to determine what the English mind thought of the prospects and tendencies of civilisation about the year 1909, would find ample and luminous evidence laid before him during a single memorable week of last June. One might suppose that the average educated mind of our time had consciously determined to record its confessions. Its chosen spokesman was Lord Rosebery, a personality singularly sensitive to the floating impressions of his time, original only in his felicity of phrase, typical in all the rest of that mass-consciousness which invades opposing parties, makes sport of hereditary dogmas, and carries with it in its instinctive movements all but the inveterate minority and the deliberate eccentrics. His words are already the rhythm of all our thoughts—that sentence about the condition of Europe "so peaceful but so menacing," the other about the "hush in Europe" which "forbodes peace," and the rougher phrases about the "bursting out of navies everywhere" in a continent which is "rattling into barbarism." It was no individual utterance. Sir Edward Grey, the incarnation of reticence and caution went out of his way to agree with every word of it. Mr. Balfour agreed with Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Haldane with Mr. Balfour. Thus it is then—the British people sees its own condition, and in this mood it looks out across its seas at the armaments of the continent. Pessimism mingles oddly with a certain grim resolution. There are peoples who see in their navies and their armies only a panoply of strength lightly worn and gladly displayed. There are men who, like Moltke, think even of war itself as the salt of life and the last vestige of "idealism." That is not our attitude. With rare exceptions we all think of armaments as an evil, though it be a necessary evil. War we unanimously condemn as a crime and a treason to civilisation. Yet while we look before us and declare that we are "rattling into barbarism," we also declare that "we can and we will" build warships "so long as we have a shilling to spend on them." Our moral sense assents sadly to the first proposition, an innate pugnacity applauds the second. Our orators toss these contradictions at each other across our

platforms, yet sometimes in the interval there sounds a deeper note, a sense that there must be somewhere a reasonable force which will break in upon the insanity of a continent, restore to it a peace that is more than a hush of foreboding, and recall it to its saner constructive purposes. But when we ask what this force may be, there is a general agreement that it is not to be sought in either of our ruling parties or in any section of the governing class. Lord Rosebery looks for it, if at all, only in that section of society which has no leisure to think and lacks the means to educate itself—among "the working men of the world." In that vision of a proletarian revolt in which the masses will say "no more of this madness and this folly," he confessed the bankruptcy of our directing caste. From a Socialist it would have seemed a natural boast. In Lord Rosebery's mouth it was a cry of despair.

It is the mischief of such an emotional commentary on our age, that it carries us too rapidly into generalities, and deflects us from the humdrum work of contemporary criticism into an attitude of prophecy which benumbs the will and the intelligence alike. Let us for a moment attempt to translate these glowing phrases into something rather more concrete. Europe is a word. One could reckon on the fingers of two hands the few men who really count in the direction of its policy. For everywhere, alike in democratic and in conservative lands, the conduct of foreign affairs is concentrated in the brain of a single statesman, aided by a few officials. Sir Edward Grey and Prince Bülow, King Edward, the Kaiser and the Tsar, M. Isvolsky, Baron von Aerenthal, and three or four others—these men are "Europe." If it is "rattling into barbarism," human wills and conscious purposes have something to do with the steering of the course and the regulating of the pace. This hush of suspicion, this competition of armaments, they are not indefinite phenomena vaguely located in the European atmosphere. The European "atmosphere" is indeed nothing but the turmoil of surmise and suspicion, approval and criticism which plays round the doings and the sayings and the supposed purposes of these few men. Public opinion is not in foreign affairs a force which pushes the diplomatists forward. It rather follows than pushes, peering and craning, guessing and wondering, a crowd of gossips mingled with an official *claque*. It will tell France "to mend her manners," or enfold her in a cordial embrace; it will think of Russia as the devil whom we must meet at supper with a "long spoon," or prepare to applaud the Tsar at Cowes; it will dream of a Pan-Teutonic alliance with Germany, or brood over the inevitable

war, precisely as its few recognised leaders teach it to think. The divisions of Europe which fill Lord Rosebery with pessimism are not the consequence of any deep-seated popular instinct. So far as national instinct goes, the cleavage might as well have followed almost any other line. The situation which has created this general gloom is indeed relatively simple. It is not a universal madness which has overtaken mankind, a return to a state of nature in which *homo homini lupus*. It is a tension and a jealousy between two closely knit groups of Powers. It is a struggle for predominance between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, a struggle in which the protagonists are Sir Edward Grey and Prince Bülow. It began only in 1903; it was not acute until the close of 1905. The naval competition, which is the phase of the conflict on which public opinion chiefly centres, is its symptom rather than its cause. It is not the mere fact that Germany is building a new fleet which disquiets us, but the suspicion that she may be building against us. It is not our armaments which incite the Germans to emulation so much as our new policy of concentrating our fleet in home waters. Each side represents its own armaments as purely defensive. The Germans aim at constructing such a fleet that even the strongest naval Power would not venture to attack them without grave risk to itself. Our aim is consciously to prevent another Power from acquiring what we call a predominance in Europe. Each in short suspects the other of seeking to bully or to domineer, each arms to assure its own liberty. It is this fear of being threatened and over-borne, menaced or thwarted, which is the real cause of the general *malaise*. We shall make no progress towards understanding the "hush" in Europe, until we realise that this fear is as vocal and as imperious in Berlin as it is in London.

The set of facts to which supporters of the view now dominant in this country can point is certainly formidable. Germans have a way of reminding us that for more than a generation they have kept the peace, while Great Britain, Russia and the United States have all been engaged in wars with civilised states. But if there is any truth in the versions of the history of the past four years which are current in England and France, it is by no fault or omission on her part that Germany has failed to find herself at war. The incident about which our knowledge is fullest occurred at the close of 1905. Germany was urging upon France the desirability of an International Conference to regulate the affairs of Morocco, but encountered from M.

Delcassé an uncompromising resistance. It is said that an ultimatum was presented, and that in consequence of this ultimatum M. Delcassé was compelled by his colleagues to resign. I have myself heard enough from a German officer concerned in the preparations for mobilisation on this occasion, to have little doubt of the substantial truth of this story. Whether the dismissal of M. Delcassé was formally demanded is more doubtful, but that German diplomacy had in effect planned and effected his downfall, was the view generally taken of the incident both in Germany and in France. Two French Premiers have publicly stated that France was at this moment on the verge of war. It is also generally understood that in that war Great Britain would have been involved, both on land and at sea. The impression left by this incident cannot easily be effaced. When the Kaiser raised Herr von Bülow to the rank of Prince as a reward for bringing about M. Delcassé's fall, he triumphed as publicly as if his generals had actually banqueted at Versailles.

There were anxious moments during the earlier half of 1906. Then came the Casablanca incident which clouded the closing months of 1908 and the early months of 1909. Once more the newspapers which closely reflect the inner knowledge of diplomacy talked of the risk of war. There was at the time a sharp controversy over the facts, and both the *Times* and the *Temps* were accused, apparently with good reason, of distorting the actual course of German diplomacy. It has not been alleged in this instance, so far as I know, that any ultimatum in the full sense of the word was served upon France. But she believed herself to be in danger, and her belief was shared in London. In discussing the results of the Imperial Press Conference, the *Temps* remarked parenthetically in a leading article the other day that during this Casablanca episode it was arranged that five divisions of British regulars should co-operate with the French army in case of need. Only a critic who had access to all the despatches and reports relevant to this affair could determine whether the fears of English and French statesmen were exaggerated. The fact remains that they were entertained by responsible men, that they percolated downwards to the press and the public, and that they helped to make the situation in which we find ourselves. Yet the occasion for these alarms was a sordid brawl, in which as the Hague Tribunal has since decided, each party was more or less in the wrong—a purely local quarrel in which no principle was involved and no Imperial interest was at stake. Assuming that France during this affair was even

for a moment in real danger, the conclusion would follow that Germany was rather seeking a pretext to humiliate a rival than insisting on any point that seemed to her substantial. If that is a fair interpretation, it shatters the very foundations of European confidence and peace.

Lastly we come to the long Balkan crisis, which ended by a German intervention in St. Petersburg. It would be wearisome to rehearse the details or examine the merits of this prolonged and angry controversy. To a mind which sees in nations rather than in governments the real subjects of politics, the dispute seemed somewhat superficial. The only people who had a right to complain of the annexation of the two provinces by Austria were the Bosnians themselves. But it was never suggested even by the Pan-Slavists that they should be consulted, or that their sanction should be sought by a *plébiscite*. Yet they alone had suffered a substantial violence and their daily life alone would be altered for good or ill by the fact of annexation. The struggle was formally about abstractions; it was really a contest for prestige. Formally and juridically no unbiassed mind could, I think, deny that Great Britain and Russia were in the right in insisting that a treaty must not be torn up by one party to it without the consent of the others. Austria chose to think that in asking her to obtain the sanction of a European Conference, the Powers of the Triple Entente were seeking to humiliate her. By way of reply she determined to humiliate little Servia, with the object presumably of demonstrating that Russia dared not intervene to protect her *protégé*. She achieved her end with German aid. The history of Prince Bülow's decisive intervention has been told with considerable detail in the Russian, French and English press, but none of the several versions bears the stamp of indisputable authenticity. It is only known that on receiving a German note, Russia, which had been acting with Great Britain and France, suddenly receded from all her diplomatic positions without so much as consulting her partners, and left Sir Edward Grey to soften the blow to Servia as best he could. The *Times* and other well-informed newspapers announced that Germany had delivered an "ultimatum" to Russia, and the same word was, to my knowledge, freely used in conversation by official personages who knew the whole facts. The note as it was published in the German press was not an ultimatum, but it did convey a menace when it announced that Germany would leave to her ally Austria "the choice of means." To explain the precipitate retreat of M. Isvolsky, it is reasonable to suppose that this veiled threat may have been amplified by

some more definite danger signal. In this long contest over Balkan affairs, bitter though it was from the beginning, and complicated by the rattle of arms in the Balkan Peninsula itself, Germany was the first of the great Powers to carry the debate with her equals from the stage of argument to the stage of threats. Her conduct after this signal success was hardly less offensive than it had been after the defeat of M. Delcassé. Her semi-official press at once announced the fall of M. Isvolsky, and for a moment it seemed as though she were about to secure as a permanent fruit of her effort the summoning to power in Russia of a Ministry well-disposed to herself and cold towards the British connection. Her expectations have, as it happens, been falsified. But in the entourage of the Tsar, at least, it is probable that she has strengthened her position; the prestige of the Stolypin ministry has been shaken, and it is still possible that it may soon be succeeded by a more Germanophil and more definitely reactionary combination.

Such, in brief, is the case against German diplomacy which a student might compile who relied on French and British sources of information. Thrice at least in four years, if Germany did not explicitly threaten war, she led her opponents to believe that she contemplated an appeal to arms. In two of three instances she for the moment achieved her aim. From these facts, if they stood alone, it would be fair to conclude that Germany was seeking to dominate the Continent. War indeed has been averted, but force has none the less prevailed, and its brutality is not lessened because it seemed so overwhelming that resistance was thought to be imprudent. War is to-day so nearly an exact science, that its result can usually be predicted in known conditions with tolerable accuracy. Mistakes are made about the resources of distant and comparatively untried peoples like the Boers or the Japanese. But a competent soldier thinks he can foresee the outcome of any European conflict. Army corps and battleships are counted and weighed, credit measured and the map studied. From the General Staff comes the warning which precedes a diplomatic defeat. It is not a war of blood. But it is none the less a triumph of force. It is in a war of steel and gold that we are all engaged, and the result of a successful use of ships and army corps as pawns in this diplomatic chess, is to set all Europe arming with redoubled energy. This is the real "re-barbarisation," for it is the negation of right and of public law, as it is a menace to national independence.

Let us now face the harder task of considering how the

events of this period appear to the German mind. The Germans trace the formation of the Triple Entente chiefly to M. Delcassé and they ascribe to him a bold strategy of "penning in" which he has hardly been at pains to deny. Their reading of history is probably accurate. M. Delcassé was the master-mind of the combination; Lord Lansdowne and later Sir Edward Grey did but make his ideas their own. He aimed, as M. Victor Bérard once put it, at dealing with Germany as the iconoclasts dealt with a Gothic Cathedral—by cutting away its flying buttresses. Isolate the great Power of Central Europe by detaching from it its supports and allies, and it must eventually crumble into insignificance, and that without the use of a hammer. Metaphors becloud thought, and even "predominance" is a metaphor. If one asks what is meant by it, the shortest and sharpest definition is that which the Kaiser implied when he once declared that nothing should happen in the world without Germany. That Power or group of Powers is the arbiter whose assent must be sought before anything can happen in the world. When we go on to ask what "happens" within the meaning of this phrase, the answer is briefly annexations, protectorates, acquisitions of spheres of influence, economic or political. Behind the whole process lies that over-rapid accumulation of capital which characterises modern industry, and that over-rapid export of capital to countries which are new or weak or easily exploited. There have been many apologies for the conclusion of the Triple Entente. It has been called a league of peace, and a combination of the Liberal Powers. If it was the first it has failed of its end; if it was the second it ought not to have included Russia. The more realistic Germans smile at these pleasant phrases, and point to two characteristics which its whole history has exemplified. Whatever else it is, it is a league which excludes Germany. With France we have concluded arrangements about Egypt and Morocco, with Russia arrangements about the Middle East, and (at the time of the Reval meeting) about Macedonia. A crossing arrangement has been concluded between Britain, France, Russia and Japan to guard the *status quo* in the Far East, and Germany has had no share in it, though she is, by virtue of her annexation of Kiao-Chau, a Far Eastern Power. Spain has been drawn in by a treaty with Great Britain and France, and that connection has been ratified by a royal marriage and a bargain for the rebuilding of the Spanish navy. But the sorest point of all to the Germans has been the "debauching" of Italy from her loyalty to the Triple Alliance. Nominally she remains a member. But actually, as the Algeciras

Conference proved, her support in a diplomatic emergency is not to be reckoned on, and she is now, with but little concealment, arming against her ally, Austria. To this process of concluding alliances and understandings always outside the German group, and always without its participation, the Germans have given the name of "penning in." The Balkan crisis only added a new fear to the old, for until the fall of Kiamil Pasha it seemed probable that Turkey, reformed and regenerated, might now be added to the league which is "isolating" Germany.

At any suggestion that this league is a group formed for defence and for the maintenance of the *status quo*, a German critic smiles with a not unreasonable bitterness. For apart from the fact that it has enabled us to tighten our hold on Egypt, it has had two main consequences; it has opened Morocco to French "penetration," and established over Persia a Russo-British *condominium*. From neither country indeed can German capital be altogether excluded, but so far as politics can back finance—and in a weak country such backing is always decisive—Morocco has become a French preserve, and Persia in the main a Russian dependency. That is the sort of thing which should not in the German view happen "without Germany." It has so happened. Other Powers have won "places in the sun" and she has not secured the usual compensation. She can point out that all the expansions and penetrations which have occurred since 1903 have profited the members of the Triple Entente. Morocco, Persia, and now a slice of Siam have been disposed of. It is true that she has definitely secured Bosnia for Austria, but that can hardly be called a new acquisition; it was part of the complicated barter of the Treaty of Berlin; the price was long since paid. For her action during the Moroccan Crisis, she would give this excuse, that she was protesting against the assumption of two Powers to dispose, by a bargain between themselves alone, of a weak State which was in a sense the ward of Europe. The conduct of Britain and France in bartering a claim to Morocco for a claim to Egypt was essentially predatory, and an offence against the concert of Europe. One may state her objection in two forms. Really what is in her mind is probably the old Bismarckian maxim, that if any Power seeks to aggrandise herself, the occasion may be turned to the profit of Germany by a process of bargaining, in which she will secure some parallel gain, some commission on the spoils. But the same standpoint is capable of a better meaning. The only check on expansive Imperialism, the only means of asserting the collective right of Europe to act as a concert to which all interests may

appeal, is that every Power shall recognise the duty of consulting its fellows before it affects to dispose of the destinies of a weak people. That principle was ignored in Morocco ; it was ignored again in Persia. If Germany has used her strength, now to threaten France and again to influence Russia, she was only employing the weapons that lay to her hand, so a German would argue, against the toils of a vast diplomatic intrigue which were gradually hemming her in. Had she acquiesced in its consolidation, the consequences must have been for her the loss of her prestige in the world, and the tying of her hands while her rivals gradually divided between themselves the still unparcelled spheres of penetration, and acquired over weaker Powers like Spain and Turkey a paramount influence. Nothing indeed threatened her in her own solid central position in Europe. That she could always have held. But for how much longer, if she had sat still to be isolated, would even Austria have cared to have her for an ally ? She retains the Austrian connection against the hostility of most of the Slavs and all the Magyars only by the tie of self-interest. She thought she saw some symptoms of an intrigue to detach or " debauch " even Austria from the Triple Alliance, in such demonstrations as the visit of the Eighty Club to the reactionary Magyar Independence Party, and later at the Ischl meeting. She had also to remember that the heir to the Dual Crown has pronounced Slavonic sympathies. She therefore decided that if she was to avoid total isolation, she must render to her " brilliant second " Austria some signal services on the " duelling ground " of the Balkans. Hence her intervention in St. Petersburg. Her success on that occasion, which English critics describe as an attempt to dominate Europe, was in her view only a demonstration that Germany cannot be " isolated " or " penned in " or reduced to impotence. It meant that there is one alliance which cannot be " debauched."

That, with such impartiality as the present writer can command, is the case for and against the two groups of Powers whose rivalry has made the " hush " in Europe. Each has some right on its side ; both have been guilty of disloyalty to the ideal of a European concert. But, indeed, to talk of right and wrong in such debates is to misuse terms. Where the fate of Moors and Bosnians and Persians is at stake only the Moors and Bosnians and Persians have rights ; the Powers have interests. There has been played before us a complicated game in which each side may with some reason accuse the other of striving for predominance. One cannot fairly say that either party has acted

simply on the defensive. Each has openly striven for self-aggrandisement. The balance of power at which we profess to be aiming, means obviously a balance which will give to the members of our coalition the opportunities for the particular act of expansion which for the moment seems tempting. In order to see the situation clearly it is not necessary to attempt to assign or to measure responsibilities. Nothing ever begins in diplomacy. Every attack is a reprisal, every manœuvre defensive. Before each new wrong there was always some older wrong. Before Delcassé there was Bismarck. But without attempting to judge those who created the Triple Entente, one may take note of its effects upon Europe. It has riven such concert as ever existed. It has rendered impossible the discussing of any question upon its merits. No mediator, no arbiter, no neutral is left in any quarrel. It has divided Europe into two camps whose intercourse consists in the measuring of each other's armaments.

When we turn from the general European consequences to a survey of our own interests, the case is hardly better. Lord Rosebery, almost alone in England, predicted disaster when the *entente cordiale* was concluded. There is happily much to be set on the credit side of the account. We are at last emerging from our insularity, and we are forging with the French the happiest social and intellectual bonds. There is even with Russia the commencement of a like process. For the rest it is from the Imperialist standpoint a gain that our hold on Egypt is now virtually unchallenged, and the City rejoices at the expansion of our highly speculative investments in Russia. But the first test of any alliance is the degree of security which it brings with it. For of an "alliance" we must learn to speak. The term is now employed on occasion by the *Temps*, and no one doubts that, whether or not a formal military convention exists, it is understood, and from time to time arranged, that in certain contingencies our forces will act together. Nor can the significance of the fact that General French and Admiral Fisher accompanied the King to Reval, and held there formal consultations with Russian generals and admirals, be misunderstood. The "league of peace" is a league of armed forces. A triple alliance multiplies threefold the risks which each Power incurs. It adds nothing to their security unless the combination is so solid or so strong that no rival is likely to challenge it. But unluckily, as it stands at present, the Triple Entente is markedly weaker on land than the Triple Alliance. France has to face the permanent fact of her numerical inferiority to Germany. Russia

with all her millions is anarchic, bankrupt, morally divided, and subject to a ruling class which lacks both the science and the sense of responsibility of the German military caste. In a general war, it would avail little that we held the command of the seas. Our allies could not certainly secure the victory on land. We indeed might suffer little, but in the final settlement our inability to strike home would none the less leave the last word to the stronger Continental coalition. It is this corrosive calculation which ruins the *entente* from the military standpoint. Its members take unequal risks. We indeed stake our prestige, France and Russia their territorial integrity. Hence the uneasy sense in France that the alliance is unreal and incomplete, until we elect to become a military power. Hence too the continual uncertainty whether in any real crisis Russia will stand by her partners. One may doubt whether in making the French alliance Russia aimed at much beyond the access which it gave her to the French money-market. She retains her traditional respect for the German legions beyond her almost undefended frontier. Our accession to the alliance makes that frontier no safer. The league, in short, is close enough to increase our anxieties and commitments—it might twice at least in the last four years have involved us in war. It makes us a factor in every Continental quarrel. Yet it gives us nothing approaching the security which Germany and Austria enjoy. We are, of course, absolutely secure in our own island while we retain our naval supremacy. But in the struggle for Continental predominance we have not at our command the instrument which would enable us to intervene with effect. For a Continental policy we need the Continental arm. The school of critics who point out that this struggle, if we are really embarked seriously upon it, may involve us, as it involved us in the days of Marlborough and Wellington, in land warfare, have an unanswerable case. But if the British public really understood that it had to choose between conscription and the Triple Entente, it would certainly prefer to return to its "splendid isolation." There are before us, while we continue our present course, two possibilities. We may take our new ambitions seriously, and in that case we shall sooner or later be forced to acquire an army. Or we may muddle on, in and out of Europe, with an alliance which is no alliance, always arming, always forcing others to arm, cementing *ententes*, enduring buffets and bluffs, watching Europe "rattling into barbarism," until one day some intrigue at the Russian Court leaves the two Western Powers alone, and France, realising that we can do nothing to secure her Eastern frontier, regretfully

abandons a too risky connection. The isolation which would result for us would then be far from splendid.

There are other and less elementary tests to which our foreign policy must submit. No one, for example, can maintain that it has increased the security of Europe. Lord Rosebery and all the distinguished persons who endorse his every word are agreed on that, though they would doubtless throw the blame entirely on Berlin. No one can maintain that it has promoted the cause of European disarmament. Even France resented Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's effort to force this question at the Hague. Nor, while this struggle for predominance continues between the concentrated forces of the Central Powers and the straggling combination which "pens" them in, is it worthy of practical men to continue to urge a reduction of armaments by treaty. The Germans see in that suggestion only a suspect manœuvre designed to stereotype their present naval inferiority, and to guarantee, by law as it were, the supremacy which would enable us to destroy their commerce and to close to them the sea-roads which lead to their colonies. We shall make no progress with this proposal until the Germans cease to think of us as the leaders of a European coalition primarily designed to thwart their purposes and promote our own, and until by abandoning the right of capture at sea, we make our navy a purely defensive arm. Their attitude is quite indefensible from the standpoint of cold reason, but it is in all circumstances of the moment eminently human and natural. It is also relevant to inquire whether the Triple Entente serves the humaner purposes which all parties in this country in some degree profess. There is, for example, the question of the Congo. The leaders of that movement, after a long period of patient support, have, if one may judge from Mr. Morel's emphatic letter to the *Morning Post*, come to the conclusion that Sir Edward Grey will now do nothing effective to forward their purposes. The reason is not obscure. In the armed "hush" any decisive action may be risky or at least embarassing. But, above all, our hands are tied by the fact that all-powerful financial interests in France are linked with King Leopold's concessionaires.

There remains the question of Persia. It is as yet undecided, but there are, I think, only two probable solutions. If our Foreign Office has reason for its clinging faith in Russian loyalty, Persia is destined to some shadowy national life under a *régime* comparable to that which prevailed in Egypt under the Dual Control. The Shah and the Parliament will continue their endless bickerings under some sort of constitution guaranteed

by the two Powers. Every attempted infraction of it by either side will involve an appeal to the Legations. The finances and therefore the administration will meanwhile have come under foreign management. On this reading of the situation, Russia first broke the Nationalists by Colonel Liakhoff's *coup d'état* and then broke the Shah by marching on Tabriz. The joint result of these two manœuvres will be an Anglo-Russian control, and the effectual end of any real independence. But a still cruder solution is equally probable. Russia has concentrated 4000 troops in Azerbaijan—more than enough to overrun the whole of unwarlike Persia. She holds nearly all the other northern towns, and she has pushed southwards to Urmiah. The next phase may be a blundering suicidal resistance from the Persians themselves led by their Caucasian allies. That will be the pretext for a still more extended military occupation, during which we shall all forget to ask when the new Parliament is going to meet. Russia, in short, will make of her "sphere of influence" a real dependency, and we, finding Teheran under her control, will be forced to do the like in ours. That is certainly the plan which commends itself to the Russian reaction, and it is for the moment in the ascendant. But the consequences of such a developement would not be felt by the Persians alone. The Turks would bitterly resent and might even resist a prolonged Russian military occupation of Northern Persia. Already their dread of this has caused them to look with distrust upon us as the allies of Russia. They are no longer in the mood which caused them last autumn to talk of concluding a defensive alliance with Great Britain. Their inclinations are veering again towards the German connection, partly out of resentment for the comments of the *Times* and the attitude of some members of our Embassy staff during their internal crisis, but still more because they realise that the ties which bind us to Russia are stronger then the sympathies which link us to them. Here once more is a situation with which German diplomacy may, if it chooses, play. An emissary of the Persian Nationalists was told (as I have learned from his own lips) by a high personage who received him in Berlin, that Great Britain and Russia "will not be allowed" to occupy Persia. One need not dwell too literally on that promise; but it suggests possibilities if Germany were to back a Turkish protest. That disagreeable developement Russia can avoid only by maintaining a close friendship with Germany.

The pivot on which the whole fate of the Triple Entente turns is in short the character of the Russian Government.

It has perfected the art of trading on its own weaknesses. Precisely because it is so nearly bankrupt, France dare not break the bond or cease to lend money. Precisely because we do not trust its good faith, we dare not insist on too much loyalty. For we know that the bureaucracy and the Court are always in delicate equipoise. The function of the first is to make treaties and of the second to break them. We know that if we press too hard on the letter of the Persian Agreement, the reply will be a heavy lurch in Russian policy towards the rival German camp. We never know in an emergency whether the decision will lie with the Tsar, or with a Minister whom we think that we can within certain limits trust. A more risky or less profitable partnership it would be hard to conceive. It was prematurely concluded. Had the French and ourselves but cared to wait a few months in April 1906, when Count Witte concluded the ninety million loan in London and Paris (the first Russian loan ever floated in London since the Crimean War), it is probable that Russia might have been to-day a Constitutional country. For a refusal on our part to grant any loan until the Duma (then about to meet) had endorsed it, would have placed in the hands of the Liberal majority a weapon with which they might have extorted the concession of a responsible Parliamentary Ministry. That chance has gone, and to-day, competing at every turn with Germany, it is no longer easy for us to spare any influence to throw into the popular scale. We look on unmoved, so far at least as our officially minded press is concerned, at all the abominations of the reign of terror over which M. Stolypin presides. It is even possible for the *Times* to announce that it "reveres" the Tsar, whose complicity in the worst excesses of the "Black Hundreds" has been exposed in its columns. Our entry into the Continental system has in six brief years brought us to an almost Bismarckian cynicism. We are courting the Tsar, much as the Kaiser courted Abdul Hamid. A Power which embarks on a struggle for predominance in Europe must be prepared to dissemble its respect for liberty and to grasp any hand that may aid it. We are not the stronger for our alliances. We dare no longer speak our own minds without the fear of offending the Russian Tsar; we dare no longer implement the pledges we have given to the Persians, lest perchance some Court intrigue at Tsarköe Selo should ruin what we call our influence.

And yet, it will be said, there were always at Berlin those restless ambitions, that readiness to resort to force, which have made half the anxieties of Europe. Were we not to combat

them, and even to combine against them? One may admit a justification for a passive and defensive combination, but not for a league whose basis was the penetration of Morocco and the partition of Persia. One may admit the ideal of a Liberal group and a league of peace, but had official Russia a natural place in such a group? But the first consequence of any combination, even a sincerely defensive combination, is that it deepens all the latent antagonism which it seeks to meet, and sanctifies an aggressive temper by allowing it to assume the pose of defence. The Junker spirit, which we sought to oppose, is not eternal. By our policy of "penning-in" we have perpetuated its ascendency in Germany. We have helped it to enlist the middle class in its Navy League. We have helped it to crush the working class. Only because of the general sense of danger was Prince Bülow able to summon the whole patriotism of the German people to sink its party differences in an Imperialist "bloc." We have silenced every voice which might in Germany have seconded our plea for the reduction of armaments. Even the Social Democrats laugh at the patent insincerity of a pacifism which seeks, by professing disinterested aims, to snatch an advantage for itself amid a struggle for predominance. The end of this gigantic rivalry is beyond the range of our vision. It may subside by the exhaustion even of the stronger Powers. It may collapse through the difficulty, amid the general demoralisation, of trusting the good faith of any ally. It may perhaps provoke the proletarian revolt to which Lord Rosebery looks forward. But the first step to any remedy is to realise that it has come about by no inevitable destiny, but by the deliberate will of individuals. Our own statesmen have done much to intensify it. We cannot with consistency deplore the fact that we are "rattling into barbarism," and in the same breath declare, without distinction of party, our blind faith in the two Foreign Secretaries who have involved us in the process. Two principles are at issue. We claim the right to dispose in our own way of certain spheres of influence, which we assign to ourselves and our allies. Germany is determined that nothing shall happen in the world without her consent. The only way to reconcile these principles is to work on the assumption that nothing ought to happen in the world without the consent of every civilised Power. We can end the war of groups only by creating a real concert.

The Significance of the Budget

By J. A. Hobson

The audacity of the Budget has put a new spirit into English politics. The nature and magnitude of its financial proposals have come upon our people as a surprise. This ought not to have been the case. For when this Government was entrusted with the policy of reconciling social reconstruction with the maintenance of Free Trade, it was evident that this task would impose the necessity of a radical finance, providing a large increase of revenue by taxing the incomes and property of those with large ability to pay. No conscious theory of taxation but sheer political necessity has driven the Liberal party along the road which many of its members tread reluctantly. To such an extent has blind short-range opportunism become the ruling principle of English politics that any measure which, like this Budget, brings into the foreground of debate vital issues of political theory is staggering to the intelligence. But the first manifest effect is to impart a new air of reality into politics. This is testified by an unprecedentedly rapid rise of the political temperature. Never within the memory of living politicians has any domestic issue aroused such deep and widespread feeling. Even in the passionate excitement of the Home Rule proposals in 1885 and 1886 there was a certain air of artificiality, for after all no considerable number of people in this country really believed that any substantial gain or loss to themselves in property, safety, or prestige was involved in the acceptance or rejection of Home Rule. But here the case is different. The possessing classes are suddenly confronted with a demand for a considerably larger contribution from their private property and incomes than they have ever before been called upon to make in times of peace. And they are directly informed that the bulk of the new revenue they are invited to provide shall be devoted, not to defensive purposes nor to the mere maintenance of customary public services, but to the multifarious enlargement of State functions for the particular advantage of the poorer classes of the community. It is not unnatural that this should appear to them a dangerous attack on property and that they should denounce it as the socialism which in substance,

though not in clear intention, it actually is. For it is a larger and clearer attempt than has ever been made before in this country to take money from the rich in order to expend it in improving the condition of the poor. Though this class interpretation has no final validity as applied to a policy which finds its justification, not in injury to one class for the benefit of another, but in the application of public remedies to defects and diseases affecting the whole body politic, it is inevitable that those called upon to pay should resent the injustice of a "policy of plunder." For though no inconsiderable part of the new revenue is furnished by taxes upon liquor and tobacco, which will fall in part upon the whole consuming public, it is rightly recognised that this precarious power of raising prices to consumers of working-class luxuries is no equivalent for the heavier burdens placed on land, licences and other forms of property. It is therefore no wonder that a rising tide of anger and of fear is moving in the minds of the well-to-do classes and that they should summon all their political and social forces to resist the most serious attack upon the citadel of wealth ever set afoot in recent history. For these revolutionary measures proceed, not from an avowed Socialist-Labour party, never really formidable in this country, but from the ancient and respectable Liberal party, still containing within its ranks many well-to-do citizens, and commanding, at any rate three years ago, the earnest and enthusiastic support of a large majority of the electorate. Making due allowance for the political necessity I named, it is not at first sight easy to understand how the full support of the Whig-Liberal party can be secured for so advanced a policy. Indeed in the initial skirmishing upon the Budget resolutions not a little defection was disclosed in the ranks of the party which, at certain points in the progress of the Budget, may gather into a more perilous opposition. But it is probable that though many Ministerialists secretly or openly dislike some of the financial proposals, party loyalty and hatred of Protection will secure their adhesion to the revolutionary Budget. But the real force behind the Budget in the country is derived far less from any interest in finance, as such, than from an enthusiastic support of the social reforms which depend upon this finance. Though this Government, like every other, puts a bold face upon its achievements, the first three years of its career have been a period of bitter disappointment and disillusionment among the majority of its keener supporters in the country. Land reformers, temperance reformers, social reformers of every order had looked to a Government prepared to do or die, above all to a Govern-

ment which would not submit to be thwarted in any of its main purposes by the obstruction of the House of Lords. Their bitter disappointment at the tame submission shown to the rejection or mutilation of their chief measures of education, licensing and electoral reform was turning to despair, and by the beginning of this year the Government had reached the nadir of unpopularity among the really earnest members of the party. The bold character of the Budget and the social and developemental policy with which it is closely linked have heartened and invigorated every group of reformers in the nation, and the resentment of the possessing classes is thus confronted by a more spirited and confident passion of reform than has ever yet been brought into action on the field of practical politics. In the Budget our land reformers see not merely a just taxation of land values, but the beginnings of a widening policy which may rescue their native country from the barren clutches of little groups of unenlightened monopolists, and place it at the easy and fair disposal of all who have the brains and labour to develope its resources for the general good, so restoring an increased population to the more wholesome conditions of country life and rescuing our cities from the evils of overcrowding, bad sanitation and excessive rents—abuses of the present system of land-owning. Temperance reformers see in it not merely, or not chiefly, the increased revenue got from manufacturers of alcoholic poisons and owners of the profitable privilege of selling them, but a means whereby now and in the future a constant pressure may be brought to bear for the gradual reduction and extirpation of the habit of alcoholic drinking. To others the Budget figures primarily as a necessary instrument for the application of those social and industrial acts of which Old Age Pensions and the promised measures of State Wage Boards and Labour Exchanges are the first instalments. The coincidence of the publication of the Poor Law Reports with the appearance of the Budget brings out in dramatic relief the close organic connection between fiscal and social reform, and setting forth, as it does, with grave formality the terrible failure of civilised government in respect of the poor and needy classes of the people, it has focussed, as never before, the vision of the nation upon the condition of the poor. It is not too much to say that the more these Reports are read the more deeply will be branded upon the conscience and intelligence of the people the necessity of giving forth whatever energy and of undergoing whatever sacrifices are essential to the execution of the first duties of a civilised State, the maintenance of life, liberty and equal opportunities for all its citizens.

Of such magnitude and intensity are the forces arrayed in the battle around the Budget that the spirit of the fight will burn more fiercely as the concrete character of the proposals is realised. In computing the strength of the contending parties it must be remembered that, if doubts and qualms weaken the support of certain sections of the Ministerialists, the whole Opposition stands in a technical dilemma which damages it for every purpose of assault. For not only do its members demand an expenditure upon defensive services considerably greater than that sanctioned by the Government proposals, but most of them are individually and collectively committed to Old Age Pensions and to many other constructive reforms whose effective execution demands a large public expenditure. It is true that most Conservatives are now prepared to advocate the alternative of a protective tariff in order to provide the necessary funds for this increased expenditure on defence and reform. But they cannot even plausibly maintain that this Government has been instructed by the people to this abandonment of free imports. Since, then, they cannot repudiate the main objects of increased expenditure, nor propose any alternative methods of raising the necessary revenue compatible with honest finance and the electoral mandate, the general character of their attack upon the Budget is destitute of principle and is enfeebled by particularism.

But if we are to realise either the magnitude of the issue or the inner nature of the fight, we must look a little closer at the novel tendency embodied in the Finance Bill. This novelty consists in an interpretation of the canon of "ability to pay" which is rightly recognised as an attack upon certain orthodox rights of property. Until lately every tax had been equally regarded as an encroachment on the rightful property of those who had to pay it, taking from them wealth which was justly theirs, a private injury only justified by the express necessities of the State. For, though economists had long recognised that revenue from land, the value set by human needs on natural scarcities, differed from other revenue not only in its origin but in its inability to shift a tax, the implication of that inability, namely, the justice and expediency of land taxation, was most inadequately realised by statesmen in those older civilised countries where the landed aristocracy still moulded the institutions of government. The sudden application of this economic doctrine to practical finance has therefore fallen with something of a shock upon the minds of most citizens. It is true that for many years a movement for the reform of municipal rating has been based on an acceptance of this principle, and that a

Conservative House of Commons has expressly sanctioned it, but then real property has always paid the municipal piper, and the equity of securing to the civic purse some share of site values manifestly due to local activity and local growth has long been recognised as lying outside the arena of controversy. But for the Imperial Exchequer to assert a prior claim to these unearned increments seems a far more revolutionary design. Yet had this tax, even in the wider scope given to its application by the Budget, stood alone, financial necessity might have secured for it a reluctant acceptance. But here it stands, not on its single merits, but as one item in what appears a conscious, organised attack upon the time-honoured privileges of the landowners. For, taken with the new duty upon undeveloped land and ungotten minerals, the reversion duty upon benefits accruing from the termination of a lease and the increased burden of estate duties, it presents a predatory policy of unknown magnitude. The extension of this same taxing principle to the privileges of the liquor trade increases the alarm, for here again the variety and complexity of the finance impresses the idea of a political as well as a financial object. There can be no question but that landowners and brewers regard the Government as taking advantage of the financial situation to punish them for their successful interference with the contemplated course of legislation.

But though the fiercest battle rages round these taxes, more real importance belongs to the experiments in further enlargement and graduation of income tax and estate duties, for here the new principle of ability to pay must in the future find its broadest application. Land reformers sometimes speak as if the natural scarcity of land enabled its owners to absorb almost the whole of the growing wealth of the community, except such as the liquor vendors sucked from the wages of the working classes. But this is a gross exaggeration of the actual power of these interests. The most generous computation of rents cannot make them more than 8 or 10 per cent. of the aggregate national income. Those, therefore, who appear to hold, as does the Lord Advocate, that land was intended by the Creator to provide an income for the modern State, and that the entire body of rates and taxes could, and should, be derived from land values alone, are subject to a very gross delusion. So far as it is possible to forecast a future distribution of wealth in this country, a diminishing, not an increasing, share will pass to landowners and liquor vendors, unless indeed a reversal of our Free Trade policy should diminish our facilities for external supplies. The great organised forms of manufacturing and financial capitalism,

not appreciably dependent upon land for their economic support, are the growing sources of modern wealth, and it is to the application of our new financial principle to these classes of property and income that a progressive State must chiefly look for increased revenue to meet its needs. Though, therefore, it is legitimate to ear-mark such specific privileges as are held by landowners and the liquor trade for purposes of particular and increased taxation, financiers are coming more and more to recognise the higher levels of general income and property as the most profitable fields for fiscal cultivation. They do not, indeed, explicitly assert that such large properties and high incomes are "unearned" precisely in the sense in which that term is applied to growth of site values or liquor licences. But the assumption that in substance it is unearned, in that it is the fruit of superior economic opportunities, and that it affords no necessary stimulus to the productive energy of its owners, furnishes the most valid justification of this increased and graduated taxation. It is curious indeed to find the argumentative defence of the landowners against the new taxes upon land based upon what amounts to a confession of the wider and sounder doctrine of unearned increment. "Why," argue these gentlemen, "should you tax the owners of sites which owe their increased value to the growing population and prosperity of the neighbourhood, when you leave untaxed manufacturing and trading businesses whose increased profits must largely be attributed to the same social causes?" In a word, they would expel the devil of land taxation by the Beelzebub of Socialism. And in point of fact the land and liquor taxes would in equity be indefensible were they unaccompanied by what is at least the beginning of an organised attempt to tax value of a similarly social origin when it emerges in general incomes. Liberal statesmen do not like to admit that any Socialistic principle, or indeed any unity of principle, underlies their finance, preferring to fall back upon the need of taking money wherever it can be obtained without great disturbance of industry. But the Socialistic doctrine, and none other, implicitly inspires and justifies this opportunism. In other words, unless the large properties and incomes of the rich did in fact contain elements of unearned increment similar in origin and nature to the rent of land, the increased taxation put upon them would be an unwarrantable disturbance of the incentives to apply capital and ability in their most productive ways, and would affect injuriously the general production of wealth and the future taxing ability of the State. Thus, though the new graduation of the income tax

with the sur-tax and the increase of estate duties do not constitute a novel policy, their inclusion with the land and liquor duties in a single integral finance gives them a new significance. The moral and intellectual defence of the Budget rests on the validity of a general distinction between earned and unearned wealth, that is, between those elements of income which are necessary to evoke the powers of mental or physical labour and the application of capital, and those which are not necessary but which constitute surplus incomes taken because they can be got. The historic importance of this Budget is thus derived from the fact that it is the first half-conscious recognition that taxation rightly means the assumption by the State of a socially earned income which in the operations of industry passes as unearned income to private individuals, unless the State enforces its rightful claim.

The association of this new taxing policy with definite tasks of social reconstruction and of national development re-enforces the interpretation here adopted. For the social income, emerging in land values, licences, or in other modes of unearned increment, is evidently wanted to meet fresh growing needs of a civilised society and the Government does well to justify the Budget by these new needs. The foremost items of this public policy are a series of measures attacking the gravest aspects of modern poverty. The large expense already incurred in Old Age Pensions will doubtless be increased in the near future both by raising the weekly sum and by reduction of the qualifying age. The general acceptance of this Act, accompanied according to our British nature by grumbling at the cost, seems to indicate a new spirit of enlightenment among the prosperous classes and a recognition that national prosperity and progress are hampered and impeded by the poverty, misery and inefficiency of the lower grades of workers. Still more encouraging is the attitude of intelligent persons in all parties and classes towards the deeper and more delicate tasks confronting them in the reform of the Poor Law, the remedial treatment of unemployment and the stamping out of sweated industries. The reports of the Poor Law Commission have impressed the public mind with the utter inadequacy of our present provision against poverty and destitution, and, though the merits of the particular reforms are subject to many disagreements, it is certain that this Government or its successor must establish a new and elaborate machinery of public institutions, dealing more scientifically and more humanely with the various disabilities, economic, hygienic, educational and moral, hitherto jumbled together under the term

"pauperism." Closely related to this task is the policy of labour exchanges and insurance with which the Government intend this session to begin the attack upon that malady of unemployment which no growth of national wealth has hitherto been able to abolish or diminish. Though the promised labour exchanges are a central feature in the unemployed policy, far greater difficulties and far greater expenditure will attach to the series of insurance, educational and coercive institutions related to them, which will be essential to any successful handling of this gigantic problem. If Mr. Lloyd George's boast in his introductory speech, that "it is a Budget for waging implacable warfare against poverty," is to be made good, we must look forward to an increasing use of public money taken from those who can afford it for this policy of levelling up. Associated with it is that more general scheme of development, chiefly of agricultural resources, afforestation and transport, which Mr. Lloyd George sets in the forefront of his constructive projects. Though his specific proposals for financing this development by allocation of the surplus of the year is of very dubious validity, the appeal made by these proposals to the intelligent imagination of the people is one more sign of the people's willingness to enter boldly upon new paths of constructive public work. The reality and intensity of this new spirit of positive progress, definitely transcending the orthodox limits of past Liberalism, is a revelation of this session. The exposures made during the last few years of the signal defects and dangers of our national life are now bearing fruit in confident demands that we shall set our house in order. To certain purblind persons this means nothing but national defence in its crudest, most materialistic and quantitative shape, but thinking people, largely irrespective of party ties, attribute a fuller, deeper and truer meaning to national defence, under which they include not merely that war against destitution to which we have referred, but many other measures, industrial and educational, aiming to improve the efficiency of our national resources. The assailants of the Budget have reproached the Government with attaching to their financial measure these multifarious and far-reaching schemes. But the finance and the constructive measures stand or fall together; they are integral parts of an earnest though tardy endeavour of the Government to recover its damaged prestige and to develope that bolder and more constructive Liberalism for the lack of which almost every Liberal party in Europe has perished.

From this general assessment of the situation it may be worth while to revert to some considerations affecting the immediate

prospects of the Budget. In dwelling too exclusively on its wider economic character I may have given too strong an impression of its detailed excellence and popularity. It is doubtful whether any Budget can be popular, for the detriments of taxation are always realised more keenly than the benefits of public expenditure. Moreover, the ulterior tendencies of the levelling policy which it contains are largely, if not altogether, countervailed, so far as popularity among the masses is concerned, by the immediate incidence of the liquor and tobacco duties in raising prices. Though it is probable that the organisation of these trades will not be such as will enable them to retain the profits which the new taxation appears to have placed within their reach, it is possible that an immediate appeal to the country upon the merits of the Budget would bring a blind vote of condemnation based upon the price of beer and tobacco. Indeed there are not wanting those who urge the House of Lords to take its constitutional courage in both hands and reject this predatory project which robs the landlord of his rent and docks the workman of his beer. And if the Lords were governed by their natural impulses and cast no eye to the hereafter they might score a present victory. But it is extremely unlikely that Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Balfour, the joint managers of their House, will permit the great constitutional issue to be jeopardised in the future even for so desirable a present victory.

As the conflict passes from generalities to particulars, the public interest and excitement which it has aroused must sensibly diminish, and the very complexity of the proposals, which at first has alarmed and irritated, will become a means of appeasement. For Mr. Lloyd George is a consummate master in the art of diplomacy, as his brilliant career at the Board of Trade testified, and he has left himself an ample margin for concessions. Indeed he has been charged on many sides with over-budgeting, partly for the express purpose of having something considerable to concede, partly in the interests of his Developement Fund. But every Budget which seeks a considerable increase of revenue, especially from new taxes, must be speculative, and it is reasonable that a Chancellor should, so far as possible, leave himself an ample margin of relief for cases where discussion and experience show that new shoes pinch. In each of the more contentious branches of the new finance considerable modifications are likely to be made, some as concessions to genuine difficulties which escaped attention in the drafting of the Finance Bill, others to facilitate the process of the Act and to buy off obstruction. So far as the new land taxes are concerned, this can be

done more easily because their contemplated yield of revenue for the current year is not very considerable. Indeed the gravamen of the charge against this part of the measure is that it is engaged in an illicit process of financing futurity. Although Mr. Lloyd George has shown that the not immediate result of the Government finance has been to reduce rather than to increase the burdens of taxation and of rating of agricultural land, it is probable that both in the increment tax and in the undeveloped land tax further concessions will be made to agriculture. A wider signification given to the permanent improvements allowed to rank as deductions in arriving at site values for increment duty, and such a reform in Schedule A of the income tax as will assimilate the assessment of income from land to income from trades and professions, might go far to assuage the anger of landowners. The grievance of excessive assessment is not new, but the proposed taxation aggravates it, and since it is well grounded, at any rate as regards certain orders of estate, it deserves favourable attention. "Ungotten minerals" are admitted to be of more speculative value than "undeveloped land" with which they are classed for taxation, and the case for forcing their developement is far less urgent. It might therefore be better to substitute for this precarious process a substantial duty upon the royalties of gotten minerals, and I shall be surprised if this or some similar amendment is not adopted. A fuller discussion of the proposed tax on the reversion of leases may show that the bulk of the value of any such "windfall" is reached for taxation by an increment duty. The argument for regarding the buildings or other improvements which fall to the ground landlord on the termination of a long lease as a deferred rent has considerable force; and if the chief effect of the reversion duty is to stop the arrangement of these deferred payments, it is not evident that any good result is attained in stimulating a better use of land. In most valuable city lands the site increment is the main consideration at the end of a lease, and the buildings are as often as not an incumbrance to be cleared for the better utilisation of the site.

On the delicate question of the liquor taxes it is difficult to anticipate the particular concessions which principle and expediency may dictate. But those who have calculated the effect of the new taxation most closely are generally agreed that some considerable diminution of the scale of licence duty upon the higher grades of houses is equitable and indeed necessary in order to prevent the process operating as a selection of the unfit. If experience indicates that the bulk of the increased spirit duties is borne by the producers and distributors, the Irish and Scotch

demand for readjustment will not be easy for a diplomatic Chancellor to resist. Indeed if these liquor taxes are intended to fall predominantly on the profits of "the trade," there is some reason to regard them as in the aggregate excessive. But so far neither the Government nor the trade has committed itself to any really intelligible theory of their incidence.

The amendment of the income tax in the direction of a nicer, and what may be termed a more scientific, graduation is possible and most desirable. The sudden leap in taxation at £5000 by the imposition of the surtax is invidious and wasteful. A merely nominal surtax, taking up the previous graduation at £2000, and advancing by minute increments to 6*d.* at £5000, would cause a larger yield of revenue with less sense of grievance and less temptation to evasion. The yield of the surtax, though probably larger than is reckoned, is essentially speculative, and it is a great pity that the Government, in the introduction of a fiscal instrument which is destined to play a part of growing importance in democratic finance, did not set it upon a foundation as feasible in practice as it is sound in theory, applying a minute graduation reckoned in percentages of 1*d.* and ascending in the incomes over £20,000 to a somewhat higher sum than 6*d.*, say a maximum of 9*d.* when £50,000 is reached. Some such rectification of the surtax would perhaps make it financially feasible to remit the higher rate of tax on "unearned income" for incomes below £500, thus meeting a real hardship in the case of the struggling commercial and professional classes whose interest on invested savings it is hard to designate as "unearned," in the sense in which the term is applicable to the interest upon the automatic saving of the rich.

Such are some of the main qualifications and lines of amendment which are likely to be pressed upon the Government from various friendly quarters during the committee stage of this measure. Though many of the other financial proposals, in particular the tobacco and motor-oil taxes and the increased stamp duties, will be subjected to vigorous criticism, it is the land, liquor and income taxes that express and enforce the new Liberal finance.

The claims of this finance may be thus summarised: (1) It presents a defence and a justification of Free Trade by showing that a large increase of revenue can be obtained without recourse to protective duties. (2) It furnishes an instrument of growing revenue to meet the expenses of a policy of social reform. (3) It affords a sound application of the canon of "ability to pay" by the discovery and taxation of unearned increments and incomes.

(4) It promotes the cause of temperance and imposes checks upon expenditure on luxuries. (5) It stimulates the improved use of the natural resources of the country, and furnishes a fund destined to their further development. (6) By requiring the valuation of site values and of all interests in real property, and by securing a full return of all incomes assessible for income tax, it furnishes an instrument of economic survey indispensable to the provident conduct of public finance.

This last purpose of the Budget is by no means the least in practical importance. A periodic valuation and register of the capital and income of the nation by occupations, localities and classes is essential to a statecraft that deserves the name, in order that the Government may know what are the available resources upon which it can safely draw for public income and what are the directions in which may be most profitably spent such portions of that income as are utilisable for the direct or indirect promotion of the economic developement of the national resources. To this requirement the valuation under the Budget makes a most important contribution. Bearing this in mind, we find a curious, even a sinister, significance in the stubborn resistance which the propertied classes offer to the valuation of their land and the inquisition into their incomes. For by this implicit avowal that the information and publicity which are good for the State are bad for them, they suggest a fundamental opposition between their interests and the commonwealth.

Le Roman français contemporain

Par Camille Mauclair

III

La littérature de M. Maurice Barrès ne participe qu'à demi du roman. Moraliste, sociologue, il n'a jamais composé de récits que pour animer des théories, et on ne trouve guère d'étude de caractères que dans un seul de ses ouvrages, " Les Déracinés." Encore ces caractères ne sont-ils considérés qu'au point de vue des tendances politiques. On ne peut guère donner le nom de romans à des compositions comme " Un Homme Libre," " Le Jardin de Bérénice," " Les Amitiés françaises," " L'Ennemi des Lois," encore moins au " Voyage de Sparte," à " Leurs Figures " ou à " L'Appel au Soldat." Ce sont des essais entremêlés d'anecdotes démonstratives, où les idées sont les seuls personnages et où l'imagination n'intervient guère que sous la formé d'effusions abstraites. M. Maurice Barrès a commencé par envisager la vie avec un total scepticisme, une ironie dédaigneuse, un égoïsme le conduisant presque au nihilisme et à l'anarchisme, comme en témoignait " L'Ennemi des Lois." L'élégance de cette attitude narquoise et hautaine lui valut la faveur d'un public qui retrouvait en lui les grâces et l'humeur d'un Renan ou d'un France. Puis, parvenu aux dernières affirmations de ce système, M. Barrès fit une volte-face adroitement graduée, et proclama que le " moi " ne pouvait s'affirmer qu'en se rattachant fortement à sa terre natale et aux traditions des morts. Il devint nationaliste, patriote jusqu'à la germanophobie, et cela lui concilia les faveurs du public aristocratique qui fait de l'opposition au gouvernement actuel, et qui réunit dans un même culte M. Barrès et M. Bourget.

En réalité tous les livres de M. Barrès sont les chapitres d'un seul roman qui pourrait s'appeler " Histoire de mon moi." Cet écrivain extrêmement intelligent, mais très peu sensible bien qu'il parle constamment de la sensibilité, a passé sa vie à s'étudier, à s'analyser avec amour, et à s'exciter méthodiquement à ressentir des émotions que sa raison lui faisait souhaiter. Il écrit une langue très pure, d'un timbre délicat, où se devine une faculté poétique que l'habitude du rationalisme a fait taire, mais qui donne du charme à la sécheresse de sa pensée. On

pourrait dire que cette vaste autobiographie, monotone et irritante parfois, constitue le roman d'un idéologue à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle et au début du vingtième. Mais ce ne serait qu'un artifice pour parvenir à compter M. Barrès au nombre des romanciers français. C'est bien à propos de ses ouvrages qu'on aura le droit d'appeler roman toute composition en prose d'un certain développement. M. Barrès a d'ailleurs pris soin lui-même d'écarter les parties imaginatives, les fictions dont il ornait ses théories, en extrayant de chacun de ses livres, sous forme de petits résumés, les idées qu'il désirait y voir retenir, indiquant ainsi que l'art littéraire n'était pour lui qu'une procédé de persuasion et un agrément ajouté à sa dialectique. Il est donc permis de dire qu'il n'apporte rien au roman et ne figure dans ce genre qu'à titre secondaire et occasionnel, bien que l'influence de son esprit soit considérable, indéniablement, sur la jeunesse contemporaine. Son roman tout récent, "Colette Baudoche," bien que tendant davantage à se rapprocher du genre réellement romanesque, est encore une œuvre de sèche idéologie.

M. Octave Mirbeau, dont les succès sont bruyants et dont chaque œuvre est un combat ou un scandale, est au contraire un romancier bien caractérisé. Il débuta voici presque trente ans par des pamphlets, puis par un beau roman, "Le Calvaire," plein d'émotion passionnelle, d'aspirations altruistes, d'éloquence et de nervosité. C'était un livre dans la formule naturaliste, mais avec plus de profondeur et d'art. Depuis, le style, les procédés et le tempérament de M. Mirbeau se sont outrés de plus en plus. "L'Abbé Jules," "Sebastien Roch" sont des romans vigoureux et pleins d'un érotisme maladif qui s'est exaspéré dans "Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre" jusqu'à sortir des limites de la littérature. Les contes, les articles, les pièces de cet écrivain témoignent d'un singulier état d'esprit. Il est constamment exaspéré, neurasthénique et brutal. Les origines naturalistes de son talent luttent contre sa curiosité du rare, de l'excessif, de l'horrible, du sang et de la souillure, qui s'est affirmée en un livre presque sadique appelé "Le Jardin des Supplices." M. Mirbeau passe constamment de l'admiration forcenée à la haine la plus injuste, et ses critiques d'art retentissantes, qui distribuent l'éloge et l'injure avec un égal excès, montrent bien que si la nature lui a donné l'éloquence, la couleur, la verve, une langue incorrecte mais savoureuse, elle lui a refusé le goût, le sens des proportions et de la mesure. Ses pièces ne présentent que des caricatures, des personnages capables de toutes les vilenies. Il aime la laideur et l'énormité, son pessimisme

misanthropique ne se plaît que dans l'étude des tares et des ridicules, et il s'est constitué le redresseur universel de tous les torts sans qu'on puisse discerner exactement ce qu'il veut. Il n'a que des instincts et pas d'idées, peu de culture intellectuelle, et plus de violence que de véritable énergie, car il change constamment de sympathies et de convictions en protestant de sa bonne foi. C'est une physionomie inquiète, curieuse : on ne peut lui garder rancune de ses furieuses attaques, parce qu'on y sent de l'irresponsabilité et les effets d'une nervosité incapable de se contenir.

La réputation de M. Mirbeau est surtout une réputation du boulevard, où son amour de la polémique, ses allures autoritaires, ses outrances, sont pris pour de la puissance et le font craindre. Ses critiques sont trop individuelles et trop mêlées de querelles privées pour garder, hors Paris, du sens et de l'intérêt. Mais ses dons de romancier sont incontestables ; il sait faire vivre un personnage, composer un caractère, préparer une situation, et par là sa place est méritée. " Le Calvaire " reste son meilleur ouvrage, un des débuts les plus remarquables qu'on ait vus depuis trente ans dans les lettres françaises. Cependant on ne saurait dire que cet écrivain qui excite à chaque instant l'opinion ait exercé une influence quelconque. Ou ne peut trouver en lui ni méthode ni direction de pensée, ni originalité de style ou de données morales, en sorte qu'il reste à un plan très inférieur à celui ou se trouvent, de l'avis unanime, MM. Rosny, Adam ou France.

M. Léon Daudet est presque aussi violent et aussi déréglé que M. Octave Mirbeau, et depuis quelques années il a délaissé la littérature pour la politique royaliste et un journalisme de pamphlet aussi fâcheux que celui de M. Rochefort. Il faut d'autant plus le regretter que M. Léon Daudet a signé des romans admirables, conçus dans un esprit tout différent de ceux de son illustre père, le tendre, le touchant, le nuancé Alphonse Daudet. " L'Astre noir " était un roman de la plus généreuse abondance d'idées générales. " Le Voyage de Shakespeare " était un vaste poème en prose lyrique que sa richesse de descriptions et son intense vitalité permettraient presque de qualifier de chef-d'œuvre. " Suzanne," " La Flamme et l'Ombre," " Les Deux Etreintes," " La Romance du Temps présent " sont des romans passionnels qui compteront parmi les plus beaux de notre époque. Des livres caricaturaux comme " Les Morticoles," satire des médecins, et les " Kamtchatka," satire des snobs de l'art nouveau, sont moins attachants, et leur verve est factice et pénible. M. Léon Daudet a certainement une des natures littéraires les mieux

douées de sa génération. Il possède la puissance, quoique à un degré moindre que M. Adam. Il a le souffle nécessaire aux grands romans. Son imagination ardente, lyrique, débordante d'enthousiasme, donne à tout ce qu'il écrit un beau caractère emporté, et son esprit souple, soutenu par une éducation très solide, a touché à toutes les idées. Il improvise trop, et il est trop impatient de créer pour se résigner à creuser profondément un sujet : cependant on trouve dans tous ses livres des études de caractère très perspicaces, notamment dans les "Deux Etreintes," qui dépeignent la souffrance d'une femme intelligente dont l'esprit est attiré par un homme et dont les désirs vont à un autre. Il y a là des pages d'une émouvante beauté. Le lourd héritage du nom paternel, et les ressentiments politiques, ont fait un peu de tort à cet auteur : il n'a pas, malgré une réputation enviable, vu reconnaître pleinement ses très grands mérites. Il n'en comptera pas moins au nombre des meilleurs écrivains de roman du mouvement moderne, quoiqu'il ait jugé bon d'interrompre sa carrière pour devenir un des principaux agents du royalisme en France.

M. Léon Daudet s'est rallié à une conception du roman lyrique, imaginatif et passionnel assez proche de celle de M. Paul Adam. C'est, par contre, à la tradition du roman psychologique sévère que se rattache, comme M. Bourget mais infiniment mieux que lui, M. Paul Hervieu. M. Bourget est son aîné, et garde le mérite d'avoir, si non créé le genre, du moins de l'avoir fait accepter du public français et d'en avoir vulgarisé la désignation. Mais M. Paul Hervieu l'emporte de beaucoup par la profondeur et la noblesse de son talent. On ne trouve jamais dans ses peintures de la société élégante cette mièvrerie, cette fadeur, ce respect naïf de la richesse qui rebutent chez M. Bourget. Il est entré dans le monde, au contraire, comme un juge froid, courtois, mais implacable et ironiquement acerbe, et il se plaît à déshabiller les âmes factices, à en montrer la vanité, la pauvreté mentale et morale, la perversité et l'égoïsme, sans pourtant jamais déclamer. M. Paul Hervieu est le Laclos de notre époque, et les "Liaisons Dangereuses" sont certainement sa source littéraire. Nous n'avons pas d'observateur plus aigu. La concentration est sa qualité essentielle. Son style est gris, et souvent lourd : il reste étranger à toute poésie, à tout luxe d'images, et n'a pas de préoccupations artistiques. Seule la psychologie l'intéresse : mais quand il s'attache à un caractère, il ne le quitte qu'après l'avoir absolument approfondi, avec une lucidité impartiale, une rigueur de déductions et une sincérité qui finissent par avoir leur éloquence. On se demande

comment le monde a accueilli avec faveur, et non avec haine, un écrivain qui surprend si terriblement ses hypocrisies, et on ne peut guère se l'expliquer que par la sorte de déférence que les êtres veules gardent à ceux qui les fustigent et leur présentent courageusement un miroir. Si M. Hervieu vient de Laclos, par la qualité de son analyse et de son ironie, par sa prédilection pour l'étude des âmes compliquées et insincères, du moins est-il un moraliste très ferme, comme il l'a prouvé dans son beau théâtre.

" Peints par eux-mêmes " et " L'Armature " sont ses deux plus considérables romans. " L'Armature," c'est l'argent qui soutient toute la société élégante, et détermine aussi bien ses délicatesses que ses vices : " Peints par eux-mèmes " décrit, sous forme de roman par lettres, la vie amoureuse, adultère, artificielle et tragique des mondains. C'est une prodigieuse étude de mœurs, qui, sous les poupées de M. Bourget, découvre l'âpre et amère vérité de leurs existences. En dehors de ces deux livres, M. Hervieu a écrit " Flirt," un roman de valeur moindre, et des volumes de contes ironiques et singuliers, " Diogène le Chien," " Deux Plaisanteries," " L'Alpe homicide." Puis il s'est consacré au théâtre et y a apporté un tragique moderne très personnel dans des œuvres comme " Les Tenailles," " L'Enigme," " La Loi de l'Homme," et surtout cette belle et sévère " Course du Flambeau," une des pièces qui, avec celles de M. de Curel, ont le plus hautement soutenu la tradition du théâtre d'idées en face de l'adroite et insignifiante comédie parisienne.

De telles œuvres ne peuvent faire regretter que M. Hervieu ait abandonné le roman, car on y voit se développer et mûrir son grand talent. Mais sa production lente et soigneuse, limitant son apport en ce genre à deux livres d'ailleurs très beaux, empêche de le considérer au même degré d'importance, dans l'évolution moderne, que des romanciers exclusifs comme M.M. Rosny, par exemple, et c'est pourquoi, dans un tableau du roman français contemporain, il n'occupera qu'une place de second rang, ayant préféré opter pour le théâtre et lui demander la gloire de sa maturité. C'est ce que M. Abel Hermant fait à son tour. Cet auteur est un cas bien curieux : c'est, par excellence, l'auteur de second plan. Il a écrit beaucoup de romans et fait jouer beaucoup de comédies. Imbu, comme M. Hervieu, de Laclos, des conteurs libertins et des mémorialistes du dix-huitième siècle, il fait comme lui des études mondaines, avec la même froideur et la même causticité, mais sans gravité et sans profondeur, simplement pour le plaisir d'ironiser et de dépeindre des êtres superficiels.

M. Abel Hermant écrit avec légèreté et esprit : il connaît à merveille le monde des oisifs, des nobles désœuvrés, des élégants cosmopolites, des femmes luxueuses, des irrégulières, des snobs et des aventuriers. Il en compose des chroniques de mœurs amusantes, alertes et bien observées, dont l'écriture est charmante et où l'on ne peut trouver de défauts. Et cependant ces livres donnent toujours l'impression du pastiche, et à l'instant où l'on reconnaît avec plaisir le talent et l'ingéniosité de leur auteur, on ne peut s'empêcher de se demander où l'on a déjà lu ce qu'on vient de lire. Est-ce parce que l'imitation du style du dix-huitième siècle est trop littérale ? Est-ce parce que l'observation de M. Hermant reste superficielle et se borne à transcrire les propos de la classe qu'il étudie ? M. Hermant donne l'impression de dépenser stérilement beaucoup de savoir-faire et d'esprit. Il obtient de grands succès matériels, il est de ceux qui ont le mieux " réussi," et cependant son nom n'est jamais prononcé par la critique littéraire, il semble qu'il n'existe pas. A la vérité, ses premiers romans, comme " Le Cavalier Miserey," " Monsieur Rabosson," " La Surintendante," "Amour de Tête," " Nathalie Madoré," contenaient plus d'humanité, plus de sérieuse étude, que ses volumes plus brillants et plus drôlatiques comme les " Transatlantiques " ou " Monsieur de Courpière " : plus il produit, plus la trame de ses œuvres devient mince, et les traits de caricature un peu méchante finissent par en faire tous les frais. Il est très regrettable qu'un écrivain si incisif et si doué se contente d'être un auteur de salons et sacrifie au succès facile le mérite d'un véritable art littéraire.

Plus près de M. Bourget que de M. Hermant on peut placer un autre romancier professionnel très écarté du public féminin, M. Marcel Prévost. Il est le type achevé du romancier psychologique à la mode. Incontestablement c'est un habile écrivain qui s'entend à composer une histoire sentimentale, à en graduer l'intérêt, à y insérer des figures, à y distribuer l'émotion, et les femmes le lisent fidèlement. Il s'est fait l'apôtre habile et séduisant du féminisme tel qu'on le conçoit dans une société frivole, et ses romans, " L'Automne d'une Femme," " Les Demi-Vierges," " Le Jardin secret," ont de louables qualités. Mais rien n'y est vraiment personnel, rien n'y présente une conception qu'on ne trouve déjà exprimée ailleurs, et M. Prévost, comme M. Hermant, confine à cette littérature aisée que la mode accueille et oublie avec une égale facilité. Ce n'est point en médire que de faire observer qu'auprès de " Pierre et Jean," de " La Force," de " Peints par eux-mêmes," de " Nell Horn," les livres de tels auteurs cessent de compter

intellectuellement, et périront tout entiers malgré les réputations et les bénéfices qu'ils prétextent.

Il y a un toute autre qualité dans les romans de M. Paul Margueritte. On y trouve une sensibilité tendre et fine, une grâce mélancolique, une émotion sincère qui rappellent Alphonse Daudet. Dans "Amants," "Tous Quatre," "La Force des Choses," "La Tourmente," "La Confession Posthume," livres écrits dans une langue simple et pure, on peut apprécier une âme délicate et compréhensive, ouverte à la douleur, à la pitié, à une morale généreuse et très humaine, tout en reconnaissant de grands mérites de composition. C'est bien là le roman intime, d'effet mesuré, plein de goût et de tact, apte à exprimer des âmes contemporaines, des types généraux, ni mondains ni plébéiens, sans facticité, sans singularité. En s'associant à son frère Victor, M. Paul Margueritte s'est haussé à composer une série de quatre romans sur la guerre et la Commune de 1870–1871. On y trouve un habile mélange de roman et d'histoire, des pages mouvementées, une psychologie juste et un sens de la vie des foules : cependant ces livres sérieux et méritoires n'atteignent point à la grandeur de "La Débâcle" de Zola ou de "La Force" de M. Paul Adam. Le talent de M. Paul Margueritte est plus intérieur et plus doux que de tels sujets. Depuis il a écrit avec son frère plusieurs livres pour obtenir une réforme du mariage et du divorce : ils ont les qualités et les inconvénients de tout roman à thèse, et la générosité des intentions y prime l'intérêt strictement littéraire. MM. Margueritte n'en comptent pas moins parmi les plus distingués les romanciers moralistes du temps présent.

M. Pierre Louÿs n'a aucunement ce souci, bien au contraire. Il témoigne de tout son dédain pour une littérature mise au service d'une idée morale, et il se borne à rechercher la perfection du style et des peintures. C'est un des très rares romanciers issus de la génération symboliste. Il produit très peu, mais tout ce qu'il fait est impeccable. Passionné de la Grèce et de l'époque alexandrine, il déteste la morale chrétienne, ne voit dans la vie actuelle qu'hypocrisie et laideur, et regrette l'heureuse impudeur antique. Son célèbre roman "Aphrodite" est écrit dans une langue très belle, d'une splendeur une peu froide, et présente avec un art achevé une série de tableaux licencieux ou gracieux qui ont obtenu un très grand succès. "Le Roi Pausole" est un livre dont les intentions philosophiques et humoristiques ont été moins comprises, et "La Femme et le Pantin," roman espagnol, est une longue nouvelle qui rappelle la fermeté, la sécheresse et le goût sobre de Mérimée : il en est de même

pour les contes de "L'Homme de Pourpre," de "Sanguines," d' "Archipel." Il ne faut chercher en M. Louÿs ni idées ni théories, bien qu'il ait parfois combattu en faveur des droits absolus de l'amour. L'amour même n'apparaît en ses livres que sous forme de volupté physique. Mais c'est un styliste et un peintre de la plus incontestable valeur, un érudit et un très fin connaisseur d'art antique. Certaines de ses évocations s'égaleraient peut-être à celles de Walter Pater, sans le parti pris de sensualité provocante qui s'y montre.

Un autre romancier issu du symbolisme est M. Remy de Gourmont. A vrai dire, ses romans participent avant tout du conte allégorique et philosophique. M. Remy de Gourmont, que les lettrés tiennent en la plus haute estime et considèrent comme un des cerveaux les mieux organisés de la littérature actuelle, n'a pas encore trouvé dans le public le succès auquel il a tous les droits. Son intelligence supérieure s'est intéressée à tout depuis trente ans, et ses livres sont aussi divers que nombreux. Qu'il s'attache au "Latin Mystique," à "La Physique de l'Amour," à la psychologie de l'esprit jésuitique dans "Le Chemin de Velours," à des questions ardues dans "Les Promenades philosophiques" ou "La Culture des Idées," qu'il écrive des commentaires pleins de sagesse et d'humeur, dignes d'un Chamfort ou d'un Rivarol modernes, sur les faits et les livres, qu'il cisèle des contes ou de petits drames, toujours il est un penseur original, un écrivain de haut style et un sensitif raffiné. Ses romans, "Sixtine," "Les Chevaux de Diomède," "Une Nuit au Luxembourg," "Un Cœur Virginal" sont imprégnés d'une volupté subtile et irritante, et travaillés avec un grand amour de la forme. M. Remy de Gourmont est avant tout un philosophe et un artiste solitaire, dédaigneux de la notoriété facile, consacrant sincèrement sa vie aux idées et au style, et promenant sur la vie actuelle un sourire sarcastique et désenchanté. Nous avons peu d'écrivains aussi substantiels, aussi originaux que cet érudit et ce poète de la prose en qui le souvenir de Voltaire et des idéologues de l'Encyclopédie semble s'unir singulièrement à ceux de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, de Baudelaire, de Mallarmé et de Nietzsche.

Le symbolisme, outre MM. Adam, Louÿs et Remy de Gourmont, a encore révélé un romancier. M. Henri de Régnier s'est tourné vers ce genre après avoir conquis la notoriété par quelques volumes de nobles et beaux poèmes lyriques, et il s'est consacré plus particulièrement à des restitutions des mœurs du dix-septième et du dix-huitième siècle. Il possède à fond ces époques, il en aime l'esprit et en imite délicatement le style solennel

ou léger. Il excelle à peindre l'ancienne France, ses décors, son goût, son caractère, et il en compose des tableaux pleins d'agrément, d'élégance et d'ironie discrète. Ces qualités se retrouvent dans "La Double Maîtresse," "Le Bon Plaisir," "Les Passe-temps de M. de Bréot"; M. de Régnier a aussi dépeint ses contemporains dans "Le Mariage de Minuit," "La Peur de l'Amour," "Les Vacances d'un jeune Homme sage," sans parler de ses recueils de contes qui contiennent peut-être ses plus belles pages. L'art de M. de Régnier vaut avant tout par une grande pureté de style et une grande finesse dans le choix des images. C'est une architecture ornementale qui manque un peu d'éclat et de vie, et où se meuvent des personnages amusants et singuliers, d'énués d'émotion etd 'énergie. Ces romans sont d'une lecture charmante, mais ne prétendent rien ajouter au domaine psychologique du roman contemporain. Il en est de même des savantes reconstitutions des mœurs galantes et guerrières du seizième siècle réalisées par M. Maurice Maindron dans ses romans historiques, "Saint-Cendre" ou "Blancador l'Avantageux."

Le roman de psychologie des foules a fait récemment une précieuse recrue en la personne d'un vigoureux styliste et d'un visionnaire exact et hardi, M. Louis Bertrand. C'est un des nouveaux venus sur lesquels l'avenir peut le plus sérieusement compter. Passionné de Flaubert, M. Bertrand s'est formé à son école. Il excelle à peindre, avec une réalisme vivement coloré, les populations méridionales. "Le Sang des Races" décrit les charretiers de Sud-Algérien, "Pepete le Bien-aimé" les pêcheurs et les ouvriers d'Alger, "Le Rival de Don Juan" le peuple de Tolède; "L'Invasion," son livre le plus fort et le plus complet, décrit magistralement la vie des manœuvres italiens qui envahissent Marseille. Tout cela est baigné de lumière, plein d'une vitalité violente, et d'une force de vérité qui saisit l'esprit. Très rares sont les écrivains capables de donner ainsi, en des fresques spacieuses, la sensation de l'existence collective des foules. M. Louis Bertrand le peut, et il a dès maintenant tous les dons du grand romancier synthétiste. Ses paysages du "Jardin de la Mort" (Tipasa et Timgad) et de "La Grèce du Soleil et des Paysages" sont d'un orientalisme opulent qui ferait penser aux peintures d'un Frank Brangwyn. Un public étranger, que n'influencent pas les modes et les intrigues inévitables dans les milieux littéraires, agira en toute justice en plaçant des hommes de la valeur de M. Remy de Gourmont, de M. Bourget, de M. Louis Bertrand, bien au-dessus de producteurs plus flattés par la publicité.

Il siéra de faire mention des romans de Catulle Mendès,

" Le Roi Vierge," " Zohar," " La Maison de la Vieille," " Le Chercheur de Tares " : encore qu'ils n'aient été que des hors-d'œuvre dans la production rapide de ce brillant improvisateur, et qu'un érotisme excessif s'y mêle, ils sont d'une belle allure romantique et contiennent des passages éloquents et des silhouettes originales. M. Jean Richepin a écrit, en dehors de ses poèmes et de ses drames, quelques romans. " La Glu " est le plus connu : il en est un qui a passé presque inaperçu, " Le Cadet," et qui est une solide et remarquable étude de mœurs provinciales, plus vraie et plus profonde que les caractères habituellement tracés par ce fougueux auteur. Enfin, la survivance du romantisme s'atteste encore dans la longue série de romans où M. Péladan a voulu peindre " La Décadence latine " et mêler l'occultisme et la magie à la vie contemporaine. Ces livres tumultueux, confus et mal écrits, où s'expriment toutes sortes de paradoxes, de symboles et d'hypothèses, ne sont pas la meilleure part de l'œuvre d'un homme qui est, par ailleurs, un excellent esthéticien et un noble défenseur de l'art idéaliste.

Le succès commence à venir aux romans très distingués et fort délicats où M. René Boylesve étudie les petites existences humbles et douces de la province, rappelant Dickens, et Daudet son disciple, plutôt que les romans vigoureux et âpres de Ferdinand Fabre et d'Émile Pouvillon, ces deux maîtres d'un genre injustement délaissé. L'ambition de conquérir une place dans la métropole détourne les écrivains, sauf de rares exceptions, de la peinture des mœurs régionales, et c'est grand dommage. Parmi les tout récents auteurs, il est permis de bien augurer de M. Binet-Valmer, auteur d'un roman incisif, " Les Métèques," peignant les mœurs des cosmopolites domiciliés à Paris, et de M. Edmond Jaloux, dont " Le jeune Homme au Masque," " Le Démon de la Vie " et surtout " Le Reste est Silence," attestent les dons d'un romancier né pour ce genre et très apte à une analyse psychologique délicate et ferme. Enfin, une série de romans satiriques et violents a rapidement consacré la jeune réputation de M. Charles-Henry Hirsch. Il se plaît à étudier les mœurs des escarpes, des filles, des bourgeoises adultères, des petits acteurs, des ouvrières, du public populaire et moyen de Paris, et il le fait avec souplesse, avec une indéniable connaissance de la vie pittoresque, et une sorte d'humeur qui mitige son réalisme audacieux mais sain. Du même âge, M. André Gide, moins connu mais très estimé de l'élite, a écrit dans une langue très châtiée quelques fantaisies philosophiques et un roman, " L'Immoraliste," d'une pensée ingénieuse et paradoxale qui fait songer à un Barrès plus ému.

Les femmes écrivains, qui depuis quelques années ont pris une place assez importante, ont surtout apporté une contribution au roman sentimental. De toutes, Mme. Rachilde est peut-être la plus personnelle, la mieux douée. Ses nombreux ouvrages, qui sont très loin d'être appréciés à leur véritable valeur, témoignent d'une invention fertile, d'une fantaisie mordante, avec une verve infatigable, un sens rare du fantastique, une vision très spéciale de la vie. Ce sont de beaux romans que " La Sanglante Ironie," " L'Animale," " La Tour d'Amour," " Les Factices." Ils sont nés d'une imagination créatrice et d'un esprit capricieux auquel s'ouvrent tous les domaines de l'étrangeté : on y trouve quelques traces d'une morbidité qui semble le dernier écho du baudelairisme, et dans tous il y a de la vigueur, de l'humeur et du charme. Mme. Rachilde n'imite personne, et reste isolée de tout groupe, de toute formule et de toute discipline, avec de grandes qualités foncièrement françaises. Plus classique, en possession d'un style parfait, Mme. Gérard d'Houville (Mme. Henri de Régnier) a signé plusieurs romans, dont " Esclave " et " L'Inconstante " surtout sont de remarquables œuvres imaginatives, bien féminines. Le grand poète lyrique qu'est la comtesse Anna de Noailles a écrit en prose des livres comme " La Nouvelle Espérance," " Le Visage émerveillé," " La Domination," qui n'ont guère du roman que la désignation, et se rangent dans le genre du poème en prose. Les romans de Mme. Marcelle Tinayre, très vantés par la presse, ne prouvent guère que l'habileté d'une adroite élève de Bourget et de Marcel Prévost qui se ressouvient aussi de George Sand dans " La Maison du Péché " ou " La Rebelle." Par contre, Mme. Jeanne Marni, qui s'était placée au premier rang des écrivains de dialogues, s'est consacrée au roman avec " Pierre Tisserand " et " Le Livre d'une Amoureuse," et y a reporté toutes ses qualités : émotion tendre et discrète, humeur, intuition profonde des misères du cœur, pitié voilée sous l'observation railleuse, tout contribue à faire de ses livres des modèles de littérature féminine. Il serait injuste d'oublier l'orientalisme passionné de Mme. Myriam Harry, qui a écrit, avec " La Conquête de Jérusalem," un roman remarquable par la fermeté du style et la virilité des pensées. Ces quelques femmes sont les plus notoires parmi celles qui ont touché avec un réel talent au roman. S'il faut ne point tenir compte des nationalités et ne considérer que l'expression française, les romans de M. Edouard Rod, né en Suisse, devront s'ajouter à cette nomenclature : il y a une sérieux et pensif talent dans " Le Sens de la Vie " ou " La Course à la Mort." Il y en a un, étincelant, vigoureux, coloré, dans " La Nouvelle Carthage " de M. George Eckhoud, dans " La Route

d'Emeraude " de M. Eugène Demolder ; il y en a un plein de douceur diffuse et de mélancolie dans les livres de M. Henry Maubel et du regretté Georges Rodenbach, auteur de " Bruges-la-Morte " et du " Carillonneur " ; il y en a un enfin, de la plus brûlante éloquence et de la plus riche santé flamande, dans les nombreux romans de M. Camille Lemonnier. Ces cinq Belges honorent grandement les lettres françaises.

IV

Quelques hommes d'intellectualité riche et profonde, quelques stylistes de haute allure, un contingent d'écrivains délicats et intéressants : voilà donc le bilan du roman français contemporain, si l'on néglige, bien entendu, la foule des industriels qui font de la vocation des lettres une carrière, et imitent plus ou moins bien, au goût du public, ceux que je viens de nommer. Nous avons en ce sens jusqu'à des imitateurs éhontés du roman policier de M. Conan Doyle ! Mais tout pays a ses parasites littéraires, dont la synthèse critique d'une époque ne saurait tenir compte. Ce qui ressort de cet examen rapide, c'est que tous ces talents, qui chez certains vont jusqu'au génie, tendent vers des buts très divers. Le mal de notre temps est d'inventer trop de formules, d'en changer trop vite, et d'user trop rapidement des idéaux successifs. Tous ces efforts ne se coordonnent pas en vue d'une expression unanime des aspirations essentielles de l'époque : elle compte *ses* romanciers, elle attend encore *le sien*, son homme représentatif, celui qui la saisira et l'exprimera tout entière. Et celui-là ne saurait naître que de la tension de tous les esprits dans un même sens, et non de la divergence d'individualités dont chacune s'efforce d'exceller dans un domaine spécial. C'est pourquoi nous pouvons dire que le roman subit une crise, et est dans une période d'attente inquiète.

Il était au contraire dans une période de résultats superbes avec le réalisme dont " Madame Bovary," " La Joie de Vivre," " Germinal," " Manette Salomon," " Pierre et Jean" dominent l'école : avec le second romantisme dont Barbey d'Aurevilly, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Jules Vallès ont donné de merveilleuses formules avec " Le Chevalier des Touches," " L'Eve future," " L'Insurgé " : avec le premier romantisme qui a créé " L'Homme qui rit," " Les Travailleurs de la Mer," " Mlle. de Maupin " et " Mauprat " : avec l'art psychologique qui a créé " Adolphe," " Le Rouge et le Noir," " La Chartreuse de Parme," " Dominique." Il y avait là une fermeté d'expression supérieure à

la nôtre, parce que le roman était la concentration des meilleurs volontés, et qu'on en aurait la forme et les nécessités au lieu de chercher à les diversifier avec l'insistence qu'on y met aujourd'hui. Le théâtre n'était pas une tribune, les ouvrages de psychologie restaient dans le domaine scientifique, la confusion des genres était moindre, et le roman gardait ses attributions, dont plusieurs sont passées à la scène et dans les études psychiques, l'affaiblissant d'autant. L'excès même de la production du roman exige, semble-t-il, une sorte d'accalmie : l'ennuyeuse condition de tout progrès littéraire, c'est le temps d'arrêt qu'il faut subir pour laisser se manifester, derrière un créateur original, la foule des pasticheurs qui répètent et dissolvent ses qualités, et en répandent dans le public une série de copies dont l'encre est plus pâle. C'est pour éviter cet ennui que nos romanciers préfèrent agir séparément et dépister ainsi les fabricants qui essaient de s'attacher à l'école qui sera le plus en faveur. Mais par là même ils se privent de la puissance de pénétration d'un groupement qui a assuré le triomphe et l'influence du réalisme, par exemple. Le roman sociologique est encore, de tous les genres auxquels on touche actuellement en France, celui qui semble le mieux destiné à reformer une école, et MM. J. H. Rosny en ont posé les bases. L'écrivain purement préoccupé de l'art de la forme reste forcément à l'écart dans une époque comme la nôtre : elle a besoin avant tout d'affirmations altruistes, de définitions des castes, de répartition des éléments moraux et des éléments sociaux dans la psychologie des foules. C'est par là que le romancier peut exercer une action efficace et intéressante et imposer sa personnalité. Si donc il n'est pas vain de conjecturer, on peut penser que la route nouvelle du roman sera, bien plus que l'évocation des temps révolus ou la composition purement imaginative et esthétique d'aventures et de symboles, la démonstration par l'étude des mœurs des nécessités et des beautés de l'altruisme.

A Communication

The Proposals of "Britannicus"

To the Editor of THE ENGLISH REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—As "Britannicus" says, it is quite probable that the General Election may put us Tariff Reformers into the position of only being able to command a majority with the support of the Nationalists. He suggests conditions on which such support may be procured. Let us examine more closely the terms of such a bargain. What we want is votes, so we must deal with those who control the votes—the Nationalist party as it stands. Sinn Feiners, Imperial Home Rulers, and the rest, may be excellent people, but they have no importance for us, as they cannot give us votes. It is not to the politically ineffective but to the masters of the political organisation—the Nationalists and the League—that we must make our bid. And we must bid in their coinage and high enough to hold them to us during a long struggle, during which they must often be tempted to listen to other offers. It is not a question of good faith. Individually they are as other men. But as a body their actions are the result of forces they do not control. It is as much the forces behind the party, as the party itself, which our concessions must be designed to move in our favour.

Of course, if once we are successful, we shall be independent of Nationalist support. We can build up, by judiciously placed import duties, such a strong interest in the manufacturing towns that we may be sure of big majorities for a generation—till the Liberals give up Free Trade, in fact. And this the Nationalists will see as well as we; they will not be content with an instalment, something leading the way to further concessions. Therefore our concession must be something final, something we cannot go back upon afterwards, when we recover our independence.

What is it that will be useful to them, now and in the future? Remember again that it is not with national aspirations we have to do, not with the influences of the future, but with the votes of the present. Things of politics, bought from politicians, paid for in political coin. We have seen the proposal of "Britannicus"—a statutory body for controlling all purely Irish expenditure and the whole range of Private Bill legislation for

Ireland. Of these, the latter concession will please only the Irish Bar. The few people who are concerned with Private Bills mostly regard them as a way of getting trips to London at some one else's expense. But control of Irish expenditure means more. It means, for one thing, putting the Royal Irish Constabulary under the League (since the statutory body will be controlled by the politically organised party). They will become a peculiarly effective kind of Molly Maguires, with the present checks on intimidation removed. The economic revolution through which Ireland is passing will be made entirely subservient to Nationalist ends. Any landowner may be made to sell his land at any price, to any person the League may choose. This patronage will make the League's position impregnable. The Congested Districts Board will be in the same position, with similar possibilities of political patronage. After this, Compulsory Land Purchase hardly matters either way. The control of the police gives all the compulsion needed, so it is hardly worth while for the Nationalists to ask for legal compulsion, or for us to refuse it.

Surely such a prospect would persuade League politicians to give us the continued support we need. Of course the Liberals will try to outbid us. And they have a freer hand, since there is no change of principle involved, and no break with their traditions. But our offer is coupled with Protection for the Irish farmer. And, after all, the Liberals can only effectively promise what the Lords will submit to, and therefore cannot, effectively, go further than we can. Moreover, the more the Liberals promise, the easier it makes it for us to induce our people to accept our departure from our traditionary policy. Voting with the Opposition will be voting for something worse. Of course our people will want managing. But "Britannicus" gives us the line to take with them, and once we can engage the party in an active Parliamentary struggle for Tariff Reform, we can keep the Irish concessions in the background, till the reform is effected. It is obvious that Tariff Reform must precede Irish concession, otherwise we cannot ensure Nationalist fidelity. But the danger will come when we try to keep our bargain, and this the other parties to it will foresee. The Commons will give no trouble, for party allegiance will be strong enough when we at last reach the end of a successful struggle. But can we trust the Lords? Many of them are but lukewarm Tariff Reformers. They follow tradition, and are prone to refer everything to first principles, which apparently they consider immutable. And the situation presupposes that the Lords have been successful

in their contest with the Liberal Party, which will not tend to make them more reasonable. We shall have Peers going about saying there is nothing like sticking to one's principles, and not fearing the consequences. The Lords are not a highly organised body. They have not the fear of losing their seats, if party support fails them, which makes Commoners open to reason, and holds the party together under strain. Individually the Peers have high political training; they do not emphasise differences on details, which gives them the appearance of party unity. But on essentials they are hard to manage. Certainly, as a body, the Unionist Peers would refuse to make themselves, beforehand, a party to any such agreement as we propose. Yet, if they are not pledged, how can we persuade the Nationalists to trust us enough to allow us to take Tariff Reform first, before the Irish concession? And if we reverse the order, how can we trust the Nationalists to support us, when they have lost the motive for doing so? This is our difficulty, and to this those who look favourably on the proposals of "Britannicus" must address themselves. To me it seems insuperable.

R. D. H.

REVIEW

"A Lute of Jade." Being Selections from the Classical Poets of China, rendered, with an Introduction, by L. Cranmer-Byng. (John Murray.)

From several points of view it is a pity that this book has not come to us without any name on its title-page, without even Mr. Cranmer-Byng's charmingly written introduction and his biographical notices. Had it appeared just as a volume of poetry, with its haunting title, suggestive, vaguely, of the East, and no more comment than the Song of Songs in the Authorised Version of the Bible, we should have been spared the vexatious speculation as to how much of the feeling is supplied by Mr. Cranmer-Byng's own personality, and how much is faithfully transmitted from the original poem. It is hard to avoid wondering where the Chinese poet ends and Mr. Cranmer-Byng begins, in such verses as the following:

> But who are these, the cavaliers
> That gleam along the river-side?
> By three, by five they prance with pride
> Beyond the willow-line that sheers
> Over the trellised tide.
>
> A charger neighs; one turns to start
> Crushing the kingcups as he flies,
> And one pale maiden vainly tries
> To hush the tumult in her heart
> And veil the secret of her eyes.

and in these lines from "The Lute Girl" of Po Chu-i:

> No light guitar, no lute, was heard again;
> But on the heart aglow with wine there fell
> Beneath the cold bright moon the cold adieu
> Of fading friends—when suddenly beyond
> The cradled waters stole the lullaby
> Of some faint lute; then host forgot to go,
> Guest lingered on; all, wondering at the spell,
> Besought the dim enchantress to reveal
> Her presence; but the music died and gave
> No answer, dying. Then a boat shot forth
> To bring the shy musician to the shore,
> Cups were refilled and lanterns trimmed again,
> And so the festival went on. At last,
> Slow yielding to their prayers, the stranger came,

Hiding her burning face behind her lute ;
And twice her hand essayed the strings, and twice
She faltered in her task ; then tenderly,
As for an old sad tale of hopeless years,
With drooping head and fingers deft she poured
Her soul forth into melodies. Now slow
The plectrum led to prayer the cloistered chords,
Now loudly with the clash of falling rain,
Now soft as the leaf whispering of words,
Now loud and soft together as the long
Patter of pearls and seed-pearls on a dish
Of marble ; liquid now as from the bush
Warbles the mango-bird ; meandering
Now as the streamlet seawards ; voiceless now
As the wild torrent in the strangling arms
Of her ice-lover, lying motionless,
Lulled in a passion far too deep for sound.

yet such conjecture is worthless and merely distracting. The latter poem, whether it owes the peculiar intimacy of its appeal to Mr. Cranmer-Byng or to Po Chu-i, justifies itself by its own completeness, just as Fitzgerald's version of the Rubaiyât of Omar Khayyam justifies itself. In both cases it is futile to try to discover how near the English poet has got to his original or how free has been his rendering. We have the result.

The atmosphere of nearly all the pieces which Mr. Cranmer-Byng has chosen for translation, especially those dealing with nature, is disconcertingly modern, though the latest poet whose work is included died in 1072 A.D., and the majority flourished during the period of the T'ang dynasty (A. D. 618–906), the Golden Age of Chinese poetry. They have that vagueness and mystery and contain those half-formulated suggestions, mere hints and whispers half-caught, which we expect to find in Verlaine, in the work of M. Maeterlinck and of Mr. W. B. Yeats, and in the music of Debussy. Here is an example of what I mean, rendered from a poem by Li Po, whose name Mr. Cranmer-Byng describes as the most famous in Chinese literature :

The yellow dusk winds round the city wall ;
The crows are drawn to nest,
Silently down the west
They hasten home, and from the branches call.
A woman sits and weaves with fingers deft
Her story of the flower-lit stream
Threading the jasper gauze in dream,
Till like faint smoke it dies ; and she, bereft,

Recalls the parting words that died
Under the casement some far eventide,
And stays the disappointed loom,
While from the little lonely room
Into the lonely night she peers,
And like the rain, unheeded fall her tears.

The soft sounds of this poem remind one of those hanging glasses, themselves made in China, which, hung against a door or from the canopy of a bed, give forth a delicate, musical tinkling when shaken or struck idly by the hand—a little silvery noise which lingers in the room and in the ear's memory.

D. G.

[*We regret that owing to the serious illness of Mr. Joseph Conrad we are compelled to postpone the publication of the next instalment of his Reminiscences.*]

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